

# THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI TUESDAY 20 MARCH 2018

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Newsmakers

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Charles tried to stop court case of Lady Diana's butler



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## WINDOWS



TDP MP Naramalli Sivaprasad, dressed as 'Brihannala' (Arjuna's disguise in Mahabharata) to demand special status for Andhra Pradesh, greets Congress MP Renuka Chowdhury at Parliament House on Monday.

## SC to hear appeal against acquittal of Talwar couple

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court on Monday admitted an appeal against the acquittal of dentist couple Rajesh and Nupur Talwar in the 2008 twin murder case of their daughter Aarushi and domestic help Hemraj. The plea was filed by Khumkha Banjade, the wife of Hemraj. The dentist couple were acquitted by the Allahabad high court in October last year.

Full report on Page 13

## CBSE to give marks for paper goof-up

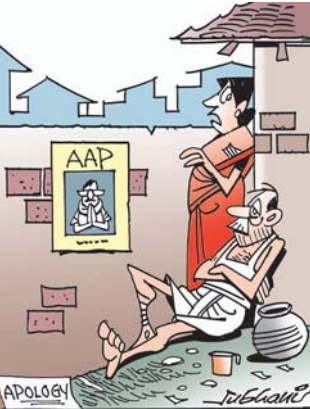
**New Delhi:** After the English Class 10 paper goof up, the CBSE on Monday confirmed that the students will be compensated according to the marking scheme which is to be prepared by the board. The CBSE had conducted Class 10 English paper on March 12.

## Another IndiGo aircraft grounded

**New Delhi:** Market leader IndiGo suffered three more aircraft technical snags on Monday. But it said two of the three aircraft were back in operation after the snags were rectified while one aircraft has been grounded.

Full report on Page 3

## COUNTERPOINT



Hopefully, one day he will say 'sorry' to aam aadmi!

## WEATHER

Max: 35°C  
Min: 15°C  
RH: 52%  
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Partly cloudy sky

## ASTROGUIDE

**Vilambi:** Uttarayana  
**Thithi:** Chaitra Shuddha Tadiya till 4.47 pm  
**Star:** Ashwini till 7.41 pm  
**Varjyam:** 3.45 pm to 5.19 pm; 5 am (Wednesday)  
**Durmuhurtham:** 8.47 am to 9.35 am; 11.11 pm to 11.59 pm  
**Rahukalam:** 3 pm to 4.30 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.32 PM  
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.24 AM  
MOONRISE TOMORROW 8.58 PM  
MOONSET TODAY 9.10 AM

## Ahead of polls, Cong tries to split BJP votes

# Sidda woos Lingayats in K'taka with minority tag

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
with agency inputs  
BENGALURU, MARCH 19

The Siddaramaiah government in poll-bound Karnataka on Monday recognised the numerically-strong, politically-influential Lingayats and Veerashaiva Lingayats as a separate religious minority and said the proposal will be sent to Centre for final approval.

With elections in Karnataka scheduled to be held in May this year, the decision is seen as an attempt by chief minister Siddaramaiah to wean away a section of Lingayats, though the BJP maintains the Congress' "divisive politics" will backfire. Lingayats/Veerashaiva s, estimated to form 17 per cent of the state population, are considered to be the BJP's traditional voter base. They are dominant in close to 100 of the 224 Assembly seats, mostly in north Karnataka. There have been nine chief ministers from the community.

The BJP's tallest leader in the state and former chief minister, B.S. Yeddyurappa, belongs to the Lingayat community. The Congress' plan to throw the ball in the

## VOTE POLITICS

Lingayats and Veerashaivas constitute 17% of Karnataka's population. They dominate 100 out of the 224 Assembly seats.

9 CMs, including B.S. Yeddyurappa, have been Lingayats

Lingayats and Veerashaivas both worship Shiva. While Lingayats follow saint Basavanna, Veerashaivas practise Hindu customs



B.S. Yeddyurappa

52 existing Karnataka MLAs are Lingayats  
5% reservation is available to the sect which is listed among Other Backward Classes in Karnataka

Yeddyurappa claims Lingayats and Veerashaivas are Hindus, and Congress is trying to play 'divisive politics'

Congress' plan to send the proposal for approval is likely to put the BJP govt at a quandary

The decision will boomerang on them (Congress)... This is just a drama. People will give them a befitting reply...  
— Jagadish Shettar, BJP's leader



Centre's court when it sends the proposal for approval is likely to put the BJP government at the Centre in a quandary. Any delay by it may impact the party's prospects in the elections. The demand for recognition as a separate religion

has seen lobbying from the two groups, the Lingayats and the Veerashaivas, for a long time amid resentment from within over projecting the two communities as the same.

The issue came

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# India summons Pak envoy over killings

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 19

The Indo-Pak diplomatic row continued unabated on Monday with India summoning Pakistani deputy high commissioner Syed Haider Shah to South Block to lodge a strong protest against the killing of five innocent Indian civilians in unprovoked firing by Pakistan forces in J&K.

Five Indian civilians (a couple and their three children) were killed and 12, including two children, injured in ceasefire violations by Pakistan forces on March 18 in Bimber Gali sector. Termining the incidents "highly deplorable", the Pakistan deputy high commissioner was told that such heinous acts are against established humanitarian norms and professional military conduct, MEA said. "It was conveyed that the deliberate targeting

## CM: Have mercy on people of J&K

**Srinagar:** A day after five of a family were killed and 12 others injured in mortar shelling along the LoC, Jammu and Kashmir CM Mehbooba Mufti, on Monday asked New Delhi and Islamabad to show mercy on the people of the state.

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of innocent civilians, who are located 2 kms from the forward line of defences, by Pakistan forces using high-caliber weapons, is highly deplorable and is condemned in the strongest terms. Such heinous acts are against established humanitarian norms and professional military conduct. Pakistan authorities are called upon to investigate into such heinous acts," the MEA said in a statement.

# Britain, EU reach post-Brexit deal

**Brussels, March 19:** Britain and the European Union announced on Monday that they have agreed on a "large part" of the agreement that will lead to the "orderly withdrawal" of the United Kingdom.

While negotiators from the European Union and Britain hailed a landmark deal on a transition phase that will last for nearly two years after the historic Brexit divorce next year, they conceded that there had been no breakthrough on keeping open the Irish border.

After an "intensive" weekend of talks in Brussels, European Union chief negotiator

Michel Barnier said the two sides were "in agreement on a large part" of the divorce treaty governing the terms of Britain's departure after four decades of membership. The transition will begin on Brexit day — March 29, 2019 — and last until December 31, 2020, and during that period, Britain "will no longer participate in the European Union decision-making process," Mr Barnier said.

British envoy David Davis said that the transition deal "gives the certainty demanded by businesses and citizens across Britain and the European Union."

— Agencies  
More on Page 9

# Lalu guilty in 4th fodder scam case, Mishra freed

## Sentencing on March 21; two cases remain

NAYEAR AZAD  
RANCHI/PATNA, MARCH 19

Jailed former Bihar chief minister and RJD president Lalu Prasad was on Monday convicted by a special CBI court of corruption and criminal conspiracy charges in the fourth fodder scam case, while another ex-chief minister, Jagannath Mishra, was acquitted.

The quantum of sentence against Lalu Yadav, 69, and other convicts in the case is likely to be pronounced on Wednesday. CBI judge Shiv Pal Singh held Lalu Yadav and 18 others guilty in the Dumka treasury case that pertains to fraudulent withdrawal of ₹3.31 crore from government account in 1995-96.

Mr Mishra, 80, was among the 12 acquitted in the case. A former Congress leader, Mr Mishra became chief minister of Bihar thrice and served as a minister in



Former Bihar CM Lalu Prasad Yadav leaves the special CBI court in Ranchi on Monday.

## OLD CONVICTIONS

Sept. 30, 2013: Sentenced to 5 years' jail for ₹37.7 crore scam in Chaibasa treasury. Granted bail.

Jan. 6, 2018: Got 3.5 years' jail for ₹89 lakh fraud in Deoghar treasury

Jan. 24, 2018: Awarded 5 years' jail for ₹37.62 crore illegal withdrawal from Chaibasa treasury

the Union Cabinet. He left the grand old party to join the JD(U) and then the BJP for a very short period. He is currently inactive in politics.

There were a total of 47 accused in the Dumka case, but 14 of them had died during trial. Two accused turned approvers.

Lalu Yadav's lawyer Prabhat Kumar said that the court will begin the hearing on quantum of

punishment on Wednesday and the process may end by Friday.

The Dumka treasury case is one of the six cases filed against the RJD chief as part of the over ₹900 crore fodder scam that involved illegal withdrawal of money from government treasuries by animal husbandry department officials to provide fodder and medicines to

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# With no challengers, Putin back as Russia Prez



Russian President Vladimir Putin addresses the crowd during a rally in Moscow late on Sunday night.

Mr Putin, who has extended his power until at least 2024 and is already Russia's longest-serving leader since Stalin, ruled out remaining President for life.

"Listen to me. It seems to me that what you are

saying is a bit funny," he told reporters Sunday night when asked if he saw himself running for President again in 2030.

"What, am I going to sit here until I am 100 years old? No."

The Russian strongman

What, am I going to sit here until I am 100 years old? No... I see in this (result) the confidence and hope of our people.

— Vladimir Putin, Russian President

ran against seven other candidates, but his most vocal critic Alexei Navalny was barred from the ballot for legal reasons and the final outcome was never in doubt.

While Communist candidate Pavel Grudinin trailed as a distant second with less than 12 per cent votes, none of the other

six pre-approved candidates rose above the single digits.

"I see in this (result) the confidence and hope of our people," Mr Putin said in an address to a crowd of supporters on a square next to the Kremlin after exit polls put him on track for a resounding victory.

Turnout was at more than 67 per cent as authorities used both the carrot and the stick to boost engagement in the polls. Selfie competitions, giveaways, food festivals and children's entertainers were laid on at polling stations in a bid to create a festive atmosphere around the election.

Moscow faces increasing global isolation over its interventions in Ukraine and in Syria. — Agencies



West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee greets Telangana CM K. Chandrashekhara Rao at Nabanna in Kolkata on Monday.

PTI

discussions about it. We will talk to all like-minded parties to create an alternative against the

Congress and the BJP," he said after a two-hour meeting with Ms

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the proceedings.

Amidst the din, home minister Rajnath Singh said the government was ready for a discussion on any issue, including on the no-confidence motion. The notices for the

motion have been given by YSR Congress member Y.V. Subba Reddy and two TDP members — Thota Narasimham and Jayadev Galla. Both parties have been demanding a special

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# Kejri 'sorry' spree extends to Gadkari

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 19

After saying sorry to Punjab's Akali leader, Delhi chief minister and AAP convener has tendered written unconditional apologies to Union minister Nitin Gadkari and advocate Amit Sibal, son of Congress leader Kapil Sibal, in an attempt to end two separate criminal defamation cases against him.

Four years after calling Mr Gadkari "one of the country's most corrupt politicians", Mr Kejriwal struck a conciliatory note while his deputy Manish Sisodia, who was the co-accused in the defamation suit filed by Amit Sibal, asserted that the "party does not want expend time in ego fight" and would rather focus on serving people.

The latest regret by the AAP convener comes just days after he offered an



Kejriwal

apology to Akali Dal leader Bikram Singh Majithia for alleging that he was "involved in the drug trade".

The apology to Mr Majithia, a former Punjab revenue minister, has drawn flak from his own party members in Punjab.

Mr Kejriwal, in his two separate apology letters to Mr Gadkari and Mr Sibal, said he regretted making the defamatory remarks without verification and accepted that they were "unfounded allegations".

Kapil Sibal later said that Mr Kejriwal's apology had been accepted, adding, "We don't want to fight with anyone."

Senior advocate Pinky Anand, who appeared for Mr Gadkari, struck a similar note and said Mr Kejriwal closing the issue was in the "larger interest of the nation" but asserted he must understand that defamation is a very strong offence.

"He should be careful in future," she said.

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Nothing done by UP govt in past one year, says former CM Akhilesh Yadav

THE ASIAN AGE

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Nation

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The BJP will continue to lose elections if the government does not pull up its socks



— Om Prakash Rajbhar, Uttar Pradesh minister

IN BRIEF

## Teacher held for obscene behaviour

**Shahjahanpur:** A teacher was arrested today for alleged obscene behaviour, police said. The of junior high school teacher in Madnapur area was arrested for allegedly acting obscenely in front of a 14-year-old Dalit girl, ASP Dinesh Tripathi said. After the girl informed this to her family members, they reached the school with other villagers and caught the teacher and beat him, he added. They later registered an FIR against the teacher who was arrested, the ASP said. — PTI

## 2 buried alive in freak mishap

**Coimbatore:** Two persons were buried alive and one injured when the van in which they were travelling collided with a sand-laden lorry near here on Monday, the police said. The lorry turned sideways in the impact of the collision and the sand came crashing down on the other vehicle, they said. Passers-by saw the three occupants struggling in the sand and informed police who used an earth-mover to remove it. However, two persons suffocated to death while another was seriously injured, police said. The injured person has been admitted to a nearby hospital. — PTI

## Harassed woman kills self in UP

**Kanpur:** Upset at being allegedly harassed by two youth, a 22 year-old woman committed suicide by hanging herself in a village under the Sikandra police station of neighbouring Kanpur Dehat district, officials said on Monday. The girl, identified as Neha Kushwaha, had scribbled the names of her alleged tormentors, Sanjay Kori (22), aka Sanju, and his younger brother Sonu (19), on her hands and legs, superintendent of police (Kanpur Dehat) Ratankant Pandey said. A suicide note was found in the woman's house, the SP said, adding that the victim was found hanging from a tree in Chitwakhera village by her relatives. — PTI

## SC REJECTS PIL AGAINST BIHAR CM NITISH

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 19

The Supreme Court on Monday declined to entertain a PIL seeking cancellation of Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar's membership of the state Legislative Council on the ground that he had allegedly concealed information about a pending criminal case against him. A bench of Chief Justice Dipak Misra and Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and D.Y. Chandrachud dismissed the PIL filed by advocate M.L. Sharma observing that no public interest is involved in this case and it was devoid of merit. Earlier counsel Amit Sharma for the Election Commission informed the court that Nitish Kumar was not obliged to make such disclosure post 2012, as he did not contest any election earlier. He was obliged to disclose any criminal record against him only after cognizance of an alleged offence is taken by a magistrate, which was done in August 2008 and that he had made such disclosure in 2012 in the prescribed form. The counsel described the PIL "frivolous", "based on incorrect facts" and "without any cogent evidence".



## Law & order situation has improved in UP: Yogi

AGE CORRESPONDENT LUCKNOW, MARCH 19

UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath has promised to continue with development without discrimination in Uttar Pradesh.

Speaking at a programme held here to mark one year in office with the slogan "Ek Saal, Nayi Misaal," the chief minister said that his government had worked relentlessly to put development on the top of the priority list.

"Apart from ensuring development and change, my government is also committed to ensuring that the benefits of schemes being launched by the Modi government reach the beneficiaries," he said.

He said that he was fortunate to get a chance to serve the land of the birth of Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay, the BJP ideologue.

Listing the achievements of his government, the chief minister said that his government had not only worked to fulfill the promises made by the BJP in its "Lok Sankalp Patra." "We have worked without appeasement and discrimination. Our schemes are for all and we have brought qualitative changes in the sectors of agriculture and power. We have brought about a marked improvement in the law and order situation," he said.



Uttar Pradesh deputy chief minister Keshav Prasad Maurya shares a light moment with governor Ram Naik and chief minister Yogi Adityanath at a function on completion of one year of the BJP government at Lok Bhawan in Lucknow on Monday. — PTI

## BJP ally SBSP threatens to boycott RS elections

AGE CORRESPONDENT LUCKNOW, MARCH 19

The Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party (SBSP), an ally of the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh, struck a discordant note on Monday even as the state government celebrated its first year in office.

UP minister and president of SBSP, Om Prakash Rajbhar, on Monday, threatened to boycott the Rajya Sabha biennial polls unless he held talks with BJP president Amit Shah.

If the four-member SBSP does boycott the RS biennial elections, it will be a major setback to the

BJP which has fielded an independent candidate Anil Agarwal for the ninth seat. The BJP (with allies) has only 28 surplus votes which it will give to the independent candidate and if the SBSP stays away with four legislators, it could mean trouble for the independent candidate. He warned that the BJP "will continue to lose elections" if the government does not pull up its socks. "There are grave problems and celebrating and talking about building temples in Mathura and Kashi means nothing. No one else has the guts to question this government and if speaking the truth is revolt then I am revolt-

ing" he told reporters. After the TDP and the Lok Jan Shakti Party, the SBSP is the third BJP ally to openly criticize the ruling party.

Mr Rajbhar, whose party has four MLAs in the UP assembly, said, "What is the use of celebrating one year of this government? We formed an alliance with the BJP because we hoped the BJP would work for the poor, but nothing of that sort is happening. I can say for sure that bribe is being demanded in the villages and people are suffering".

Mr Rajbhar also did not attend the one year celebrations of the state government on Monday.

## Centre refuses to give assurance on Rohingyas

J. VENKATESAN NEW DELHI, MARCH 19

The Centre on Monday refused to give any assurance in Supreme Court that Rohingya Muslims would not be pushed back to Myanmar, except saying that those who are already in India would be given medical facilities.

Additional solicitor general Tushar Mehta made this oral statement before a three-judge Bench of Chief Justice Dipak Misra and Justices A.M. Kanwilkar and D.Y. Chandrachud hearing a batch of petitions seeking to restrain India from deporting 40,000 Rohingyas to Myanmar. Taking note of the submission, the Bench posted the matter for final hearing on April 9.

The ASG told the court that the government was exploring diplomatic solutions being worked at the

► **ASG Tushar Mehta said India is already facing serious problems of infiltration because of its porous border with other countries**

executive level and the court should not pass any order at this stage and it should be left to the wisdom of the executive. It would not be in national interest for the court to issue a direction to stop their deportation.

The additional solicitor general said India is already facing serious problems of infiltration because of its porous border with other countries, which is the root cause of spread of terrorism in the country, which is taking thousands of lives of innocent citizens and security personnel. Securing the borders of

any sovereign nation in accordance with law, is an essentially function and this court would not issue any direction not only to the Central government but also to all States having a common border. The ASG asked the court to take note of change of demography due to influx of refugees, destabilisation and disintegration of society.

Counsel Prashant Bhushan, Colin Gonsalves and Ashwini Kumar brought to the notice of the court that the BSF is pushing the Rohingyas trying to enter the country as refugees.

It was a human rights issue as they are being butchered in Myanmar following ethnic war. For those already in India medical and education facilities are not provided and pleaded with the court to issue necessary directions.

## Herald case: HC asks firm to deposit ₹10 crores

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 19

The Delhi high court on Monday directed Young Indian Pvt Ltd, in which Congress president Rahul Gandhi and his mother Sonia Gandhi are major stakeholders, to deposit ₹10 crore in the ₹249.15 crore income tax proceedings against it.

A two-judge bench of Justices S. Ravindra Bhat and A.K. Chawla directed the company — earlier summoned along with Mrs Gandhi and Mr Rahul Gandhi as an accused by a trial court in the National Herald misappropriation of assets case — to deposit half the amount with the Income Tax department before March 31 and the remaining by April 15. The high court said subject to deposit of the amount, the tax authorities shall not enforce the demand of ₹249.15 crore made on the company for the assessment year 2011-12.

### INSIDE INDIA

## 2 COPS TRY TO STOP GAMBLING, GET THRASHED

Bengaluru, March 19:

Two constables were beaten up for allegedly trying to prevent some persons from gambling on "Ugadi" festival day near here, the police said on Monday.

The constables, Basappa and Sharanappa, went to a government school in the area yesterday following a tip-off that some people were gambling there on Ugadi, the lunar New Year's day in Karnataka, they said.

The police said the gang verbally abused, thrashed and chased them away.

With the video of the incident going viral, police launched a crackdown and nabbed four of them.

"So far we arrested Kumar, Sandeep, Murthy and Murali," police said. There were at least a dozen people involved in the attack, they added. — PTI

## SCHOOL HEADMASTER ACCUSED OF SHOWING PORN TO GIRLS

AGE CORRESPONDENT ROURKELA (ODISHA), MARCH 19

Several Class 10 tribal girl students of Jemamani high school under Tikayatpali police limits in Odisha's Sundargarh district on Monday accused headmaster Kshetrabasi Pradhan of molesting



Chhattisgarh chief minister Raman Singh meets tribal children during his visit to remote village of Pushapal in South Bastar district on Monday. — ASIAN AGE

## INDIA, EU TO SHARE EARTH DATA FROM EACH OTHER'S SATELLITE

New Delhi, March 19:

India and the European Union on Monday signed an agreement that will enable them to share earth observation data from each other's satellite. The pact was inked in Bengaluru by Philippe Brunet, Director for Space Policy, Copernicus and Defence, on behalf of the European Commission and by PG Diwakar, scientific secretary, said a statement by an EU delegation to India. The Copernicus programme provides a wide range of applica-

tions like climate change, land, ocean and atmosphere monitoring as well as support in forecasting, management and mitigation of natural disasters. Its full, free and open data policy has proven its merits by allowing the development of a thriving user base in Europe and beyond, it said.

On the other hand, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has developed an ambitious and wide-ranging earth observation programme. — PTI

centre. On February 23

night, the headmaster allegedly showed the girls obscene videos on his mobile phone and touched them inappropriately. The students further alleged that when they resisted his act, he threatened to get them failed in the examination. A few days after the exams concluded on March 8, the girls mustered courage and narrated the ordeal to their parents.



The yagna in progress in Meerut. — PTI

Bhainsali ground. Apart from wood, about 100 quintals of black sesame seeds, 60 quintals of rice, 30 quintals of barley and 150

quintals of ghee will be used in the Maha Yagya.

Girish Bansal, vice-president, Shri Ayutchandi Mahayagya Samiti, told reporters that "The Hindu religion believes that yagya leads to purification of air. There is no scientific evidence to prove this because no research has been done so far. However, this city will see that the air turns pure once the yagya is complete".

Mr Gyanendra Agarwal, president of the Samiti said, "Mango wood burnt

has named Bhimrao Ambedkar as its candidate and is banking on opposition support to ensure his victory. BSP MLA Mukhtar Ansari is in jail and has not yet been given permission by the court to attend the assembly and cast his vote which leaves the BSP with an effective strength of 18 MLAs. The Samajwadi Party, on the other hand, is left with only nine surplus votes after allotting 37 votes to Mrs Jaya Bachchan since Mr Nitin Agarwal has already declared his preference for the BJP. The Congress has seven votes and the RLD has one vote and all of this adds up to 35 votes but only if there is no cross voting.

The Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party (SBSP) which has four MLAs and is a BJP ally has already started sending out warning signals but the BJP is confident that its ally will continue to support it in the RS polls.

Om Prakash Rajbhar, Uttar Pradesh minister and SBSP president, has warned that the BJP had not consulted him in candidate selection for the Rajya Sabha polls and he was not willing to be taken for granted.

"Om Prakash Rajbhar is a political bargainer and that is what he is doing at the moment. We are in touch with him and there will be no problem on that score", the Bharatiya Janata Party functionary said.

## Elderly woman assaulted by kin

**Kannur (Kerala), March 19:** A video of a 90-year old woman being beaten up by her granddaughter in Kannur in north Kerala has gone viral on the social media, following which police have arrested the accused on Monday.

The case was registered against Deepa (40), the elderly woman's granddaughter, under various sections of IPC, including gain by unlawful means of property to which the person is not legally entitled, the police said.

The elderly woman, identified as Kalyani, has been shifted to hospital, the police said.

In the video, the nonagenarian woman is heard wailing as she is thrashed.

One of the woman's neighbours shot the video on his mobile and uploaded it on the social media. The police filed an FIR after taking cognizance of the video.

A weeping Kalyani is heard in the video saying that she is beaten up every day by her granddaughter and that she has bruises all over. — PTI

► **In the video, the nonagenarian woman is heard wailing as she is thrashed. One of the woman's neighbours had shot the video on his mobile.**

## 500ql of wood burnt to curb pollution

AGE CORRESPONDENT LUCKNOW, MARCH 19

A nine day long Maha Yagya is being held in Meerut district to reduce pollution. The Maha Yagya, which began on Sunday, is being conducted by 350 Brahmins from Varanasi.

Organised by the Shri Ayutchandi Mahayagya Samiti, the Maha Yagya will burn more than 500 quintals of mango wood in the 108 'Havan kunds' that have been built on the

quintals of black sesame seeds, 60 quintals of rice, 30 quintals of barley and 150





Need ecosystem to convert innovations into enterprises, says Prez Ram Nath Kovind

Question paper is uploaded by pvt contractor on his own server over which the SSC has neither access nor control...

— Randeep Surjewala, Congress leader

IN BRIEF

Road contractor killed by Maoists

Bhopal: Suspected Maoists on Monday brutally killed a contractor, hired for laying road in Tumnar area in Chhattisgarh's south Bastar district of Bijapur, by slitting his throat. The ultras then torched four vehicles and a machine being used for construction of the road before fleeing the spot, a senior police officer posted in Bastar said. A group of armed Naxals stormed the road construction site on Monday morning and asked the workers to leave the place. They then killed the contractor and set on fire the vehicles parked there before fleeing the spot, he said. This was the third such incident in the district in the last one month.

3-year RI to lawyer for abusing woman

Thane: A Thane court has sentenced a 45-year-old lawyer to three years of rigorous imprisonment for trespassing in the office of a woman advocate and abusing her for refusing his marriage proposal. "When a woman says 'no', it is really 'no'," observed the court of first class judicial magistrate. The lawyer was convicted under IPC sections 452 (house-trespass after preparation for hurt, assault or wrongful restraint), 509 (word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman) and 504 (intentional insult with an intent to provoke breach of peace). — PTI

Arguments deferred on Karti CA bail plea

New Delhi: A Delhi court on Monday deferred the arguments on a plea of Karti Chidambaram's CA S. Bhaskaram seeking anticipatory bail fearing arrest by the CBI in the INX Media case, after the probe agency sought time to file a reply. Special Judge Sunil Rana, who has already granted him bail in the ED case, posted the matter for hearing on March 26. The counsel for Mr Bhaskaram had moved an anticipatory bail application on March 12 before the court apprehending that after the ED, the CBI would seek his custody for interrogation. The special court had on March 13 granted bail to Mr Bhaskaram in the INX Media money laundering.

MODI WISHES PUTIN ON WIN IN PREZ POLLS

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 19

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday called up Russian President Vladimir Putin to congratulate him on his victory in the presidential elections held in Russia on Sunday. Mr Putin has been re-elected to office. India is trying to further strengthen its time-tested relationship with Russia despite New Delhi's close ties with the United States. In fact, the "Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership" between the two countries was referred to by PM Modi during his phone call. In a statement, the MEA said, "The PM had a telephone call with the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin to congratulate him on his victory in the Presidential elections held in Russia yesterday. Conveying his compliments on Mr Putin's success, the PM expressed the hope that under Mr Putin's leadership, the 'Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership' between India and the Russian Federation will continue to grow from strength to strength. Mr Modi also stated that he looked forward to welcoming President Putin in India for the Annual Summit later this year.

IndiGo's woes continue as 3 aircraft face tech glitches

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 19

Market leader IndiGo suffered three more aircraft technical snags on Monday, adding to its woes. But it said two of the three aircraft were back in operation after the snags were rectified. On Sunday, the airline had suffered two aircraft technical snags.

IndiGo has already cancelled hundreds of its flights till the end of the month after aviation regulator DGCA grounded a total of 11 of its A320neo aircraft — fitted with at least one P&W 1100 engines with a serial number of 450 and beyond—over safety issues.

In a statement on Monday, IndiGo said, "An A320 (non neo) aircraft VT INZ operating Cochin-Mumbai and another A320 (non neo) aircraft VT IFU operating Mumbai-Goa, had technical snags detected during departure. Both these aircraft were immediately withdrawn for rectification. The issues were rectified and the aircraft are back in operation. An A320 neo aircraft that operated Mumbai-Jammu, during maintenance checks was detected with leakage from one engine. This is a technical snag and it is being rectified. This is not related to the PW engine on-going concerns."

The airline added, "Out of 2000 plus flights in the past 48 hours we detected 5 technical snags and out of these only one aircraft has been grounded. Rest four aircraft are back in operation."

SSC row: Cong wants Jitendra Singh to resign

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 19

The Congress on Monday demanded the sacking of minister of personnel Jitendra Singh and the SSC chairman over the so called SSC scam.

The clamour around the purported Staff Selection Commission (SSC) examination paper leak scam has been continuing unabated for the past several days. Hundreds of aspirants have been staging protests in the heart of the national capital, while the Opposition has been lashing out at the Centre for its "inaction".

On March 5, the Centre ordered a CBI inquiry into the alleged scam.

"We have accepted the demands of the protesting candidates and have given orders for a CBI inquiry. Protests should now stop," said home minister Rajnath Singh.

Congress president Rahul Gandhi, amongst other political leaders, visited and met the agitating students. Moreover, Congress has linked this to the Vyapam scam of Madhya Pradesh.



AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 19

Congress president Rahul Gandhi launched a scathing attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the rising number of unemployment in the country.

Accusing the Modi government of "living in denial", the Congress president tweeted: "The Nobel prize winning economist, Paul Krugman, confirms what we've been saying for over two years now. Mass unemployment is the biggest threat India faces. Unfortunately, we have a PM who lives in denial. Afraid his 'acche din' PR will take a beating."

Mr Gandhi also used a media report, quoting Mr Krugman's warning that India's story could end with mass unemployment. The Congress has been attacking the government for its failure to provide jobs to the youth. In its recent concluded plenary, the party said the country needed to be "rescued from the hands of incompetent economic managers" and the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) philosophical belief in a "coercive economic regime".

The party's economic resolution stated that "the abysmal economic management" has resulted in the lack of jobs for millions of Indian youths.

The Nobel prize winning economist, Paul Krugman, confirms what we've been saying for over two years now. Mass unemployment is the biggest threat India faces...

— Rahul Gandhi, Cong chief

There has been a concerted effort from the Congress to highlight the economic failures of the government. In all the election rallies in Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, and

now Karnataka, the Congress is raising the issue of lack of job opportunities.

Meanwhile, Mr Gandhi has also taken to Twitter to corner the government.

Attacking the government on the state of economy, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had also said, "In 2014, BJP claimed that if it came to power it would provide 2 crore jobs. But we have not seen even two lakh jobs."

He also added that the said "ill-thought and ill-conceived" demonetisation and the "hastily put forward" legislation for GST has destroyed many jobs and created problems for the small and medium industry.



Police lathicharge mining industry workers during their protesting in Panaji on Monday. — PTI

Mining ban stir intensifies, cops resort to lathicharge

Panaji, March 19: The police on Monday baton-charged mining workers who laid siege to two gateway bridges to Panaji a bid to march into the city to protest the Supreme Court-imposed ban on iron ore extraction in the coastal state.

BJP MLA from Curchorem constituency in South Goa district Niles Cabral and many protesters were injured in the lathicharge, a police officer said.

Thousands of mining and allied industry workers had gathered in the

morning at the Kadamba bus stand at the city's entrance from where they wanted to march towards the Azad Maidan, a distance of two km. However, anticipating a law and order issue, district collector Nila Mohanan stopped the agitators from entering the city.

The protesters, who had come from different villages of the iron ore-rich mining belt of North and South Goa districts, then blocked the main entry roads to the state capital, including the two bridges on the Mandovi river,

leading to heavy traffic snarls and chaos.

The bridges are important links connecting the North Goa tourism belt with South Goa where facilities such as the airport and railway stations are located.

As the agitators continued to stay put, agriculture minister Sudin Dhavalikar of the MGP, his Cabinet colleagues Vijai Sardesai and Jayesh Salgaonkar, MLAs Niles Cabral and Dipak Pawaskar rushed to meet the agitators and tried to pacify them. — PTI



PARLIAMENT DIARY

— BY GAUTAM LAHIRI

OPPOSITION MPs CLAMOUR FOR NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION DAY

TDP and YSR Congress MPs are regularly pressing for a no-confidence motion in the Lok Sabha. But it's being scuttled by the AIADMK MPs as they come to the Well of the House and it gets adjourned then. However, more than 50 MPs of different parties from the Opposition stand up in support of the no-confidence motion every day. Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan said since the House is not in order, she can't take up the motion. The Opposition parties are planning to write to the Speaker in this regard. According to them, the House itself is competent to decide the fate of the no-confidence motion, not the Speaker. A debate on the parliamentary proceedings is on the cards now.

UNCERTAINTY HANGS OVER KAIRANA BYELECTION

After a stunning victory in the Gorakhpur and Phulpur by-elections of the Lok Sabha seats, the MPs of Opposition parties are gearing up for a possible bypoll in the Kairana seat in Uttar Pradesh. Samajwadi and BSP leaders have started discussions in the Parliament House, but the Congress is somewhat sceptical about the elections in near future. The ruling BJP MP died almost three months ago. Generally, the Election Commission conducts election within six months of the vacancy of seat. Maybe, the Congress candidate thinks that the poll panel is not very keen on holding election right now. According to the rules, as the general elections are due within one year of the completion of the present Lok Sabha, the Election Commission has right not to hold the election within six months. Congress informed the SP and BSP leaders that the government might go in for general elections by the end of the year. Therefore, it's not only about Kairana alone but they should start discussions on all the seats in Uttar Pradesh.

JOURNOS, MPs BREAK BREAD AS SPEAKER MAHAJAN TURNS HOST

Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan on Monday hosted lunch for all the journalists and MPs of both the Houses on the occasion of Gudi Padwa inside the Parliament House complex. While journalists were given lunch in the canteen of Parliament, MPs were hosted down ground floor. Most of the MPs had lunch, but those from the TDP And YSR Congress made themselves scarce as the Speaker was not allowing their no-confidence motion. During the ceremony, the star attraction was the newly elected Tripura chief minister Biplab Kumar Dev who after being sworn in came to the House for the first time. He was mobbed by the journalists and the BJP leaders.



Solanki 'resigns' as Cong Gujarat chief

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 19

Gujarat Congress chief Bharatsinh Solanki has resigned from his post. After the plenary, Mr Solanki met Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Monday and tendered his resignation. He also requested Mr Gandhi to relieve him of his responsibility as the Gujarat PCC president.

Mr Solanki had also offered to resign after the results of the Gujarat assembly elections in December last year. The Congress had increased its tally substantially in the Gujarat assembly, but fell short of defeating the BJP in the home state of the Prime Minister and BJP national president Amit Shah.

Insiders claim that Mr Solanki was miffed with the party because he was overlooked for the two Rajya Sabha seats from Gujarat. The Congress chose Mr Narainbhai Rathwa and Ms Amee Yagnik over Mr Solanki for the two seats in the



Bharatsinh Solanki

Congress kitty. Mr Solanki was lobbying hard for a Rajya Sabha berth from his home state. He had expressed his desire in this regard to senior leaders close to the party high command.

However, people close to Mr Solanki told this newspaper that he is going abroad for about two months. It would be appropriate to have a new incumbent as he would remain politically inactive for sometime. Officially, the resignation has not been accepted yet.

After landing in Ahmedabad, Mr Solanki scotched talk of his resignation. He added, "The party has given me and my family so much. I am a committed soldier of the party."

Italian official says both nations share unique cultural ties

'Only India has Roman ruins like Italy'

New Delhi, March 19: India shares a "unique" cultural relationship with Italy and is the world's only country where a Roman settlement dating back more than 2,000 years can be found, a senior Italian official has said.

The settlement, now called Arikamedu, is in Kakkayanthope, four km from Puducherry town, said Andrea Baldi, director of Italian embassy's Cultural Centre. India and Italy are, along with with China and a few other nations, the "powerhouses of culture in the world", he said.

"We have a very unique ancient cultural tradition

and have enormous richness in our cultures," Mr Baldi said.

"India is the only country (outside Italy) where you find Roman ruins. There is a Roman settlement near Puducherry which was established more than 2,000 years ago by a Roman trader to export Indian items like spices and clothes to Italy," Baldi said on the sidelines of an event held here last night to celebrate the 70th anniversary of India-Italy bilateral ties.

Archaeologists have found beads made of gold, glass and semi-precious stones (some with Greek or Roman designs),

Roman settlement

The Roman settlement, now called Arikamedu, is in Kakkayanthope, 4 km from Puducherry town, and dates back more than 2,000 yrs

Roman lamps and Roman glass items among others at the site, which was badly damaged during the 2004 tsunami.

Noting that culture transcends geographical boundaries, he said it was easily understood by people

and therefore more helpful than politics in establishing friendships.

"Political exchanges are mostly confined to corridors of power, whereas cultural exchanges involve people to people contacts," he said.

He said the cultural centre had started a series of programmes, including exhibitions and performances, in February.

"This is the last performance in a series of programmes organised for the Indian public...The response has been very good. People have come in large numbers and shown great interest," he added. — PTI

MNS workers target Gujarati signboards

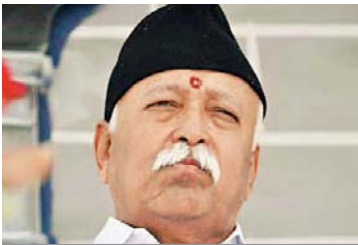
Thane, March 19: Activists of the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) have pulled down Gujarati signboards at some commercial establishments in the district.

The cadres of the Raj Thackeray-led party smashed and pulled down over 20 signboards on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad highway in the district's Vasai area late Sunday night, MNS Thane region president Avinash Jadhav said on Monday.

He asserted that their agitation against such signboards would continue. — PTI

 TRANSMISSION CORPORATION OF ANDHRA PRADESH LIMITED <b>e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE</b>				
The Transmission Corporation of A.P. Limited invites sealed bids for the following works.				
Specification No.	Name of Work	Date and Time of availability of bid document	Tender ID in <a href="http://www.tender.approcurement.gov.in">http://www.tender.approcurement.gov.in</a> website	
Spec.No. PMM22-e-17 / 2018 (Lot-I to IV)	Supply of above C & R Panels & necessary Equipment under RMI 2017-18 and O&M and necessary support while Erection, Installation, Testing & Commissioning	09-03-2018 at 06.00 PM.	179017	
Spec.No. PMM22-e-18 / 2018	Supply of 16 Nos. AC Distribution Boards (Outdoor) (LTAC) Panels, 3 Nos. DCDB Panel, 1 No. 220 kv PTDB Panel & 2 Nos. 132 kv PTDB Panel and necessary support while Erection, Installation, Testing & Commissioning	19-03-2018 at 05.00 PM.	179106	
<b>Note:</b> -i) Tender documents will be available On-line at date and time as mentioned above. ii) Name and address of the officer inviting tenders-Chief Engineer/ Construction. iii) Contractors / firms are requested to upload the information in the Zip format preferably. iv) Further details can be seen @ <a href="http://www.tender.approcurement.gov.in">http://www.tender.approcurement.gov.in</a> v) Bidding document is available on <a href="http://www.tender.approcurement.gov.in">http://www.tender.approcurement.gov.in</a>				
Phone: 0866-2429228,29. Extn nos. 2033, 2034, 2086, 2040. R.O.No:56/17			Sd/- Chief Engineer/Construction	





RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat says the Sangh believes in non-violence and truth

Ever since Modi government took over, Kashmir is being tackled through military means only

— Sitaram Yechury, CPI(M) general secy

IN BRIEF

MLA to PM: Unfurl flag in Lahore belt

Jammu: A National Conference (NC) legislator on Monday asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to either unfurl the Tricolour in the Lahore belt of Pakistan or else “leave Kashmir”. The controversial remark was made by Mendhar MLA Javed Rana at the funeral of five members of a family killed on Sunday by Pakistani forces in shelling along the Line of Control in Balakote sector in Poonch district. “I just want to say to this incompetent government at the Centre that stop playing politics over our dead bodies. If Modi sahib you are true to your words, then unfurl the (national) flag in Lahore. Or otherwise leave Kashmir,” Rana said. — PTI

Chhota Rajan’s kin booked for rape

Mumbai: A case has been registered against Deepak Nikalje, brother of jailed gangster Chhota Rajan, for alleged rape and sexual harassment based on the complaint of a 22-year-old woman, police said on Monday. Officials said that the woman, who used to reside in Siddharth Colony in suburban Chembur, in her complaint yesterday, alleged that Nikalje exploited her on the promise of marriage. Deputy Commissioner of Police, Zone VI, Sahaji Umap, said, “We recorded her statement and based on it, a ‘zero FIR’ was registered by Tilak Nagar police. — PTI

Leopard mauls boy, woman to death

Raisen (MP): A leopard has mauled a minor boy and a woman to death in the last two days, a forest official said on Monday. The leopard first killed a boy Sitaram Mehra (11) at Bhagdei in Bareilly tehsil of the district. The animal also mauled an 18-year-old tribal woman, Meena Bai, to death at Dagdaga village in the area, forest ranger, Hariom Manu said. The leopard attacked Sitaram in the intervening night of Saturday-Sunday, when he had gone to answer nature’s call outside his house in the open courtyard, Manu said. His kin found his mutilated body in the morning on a hillock, the official said. Similarly, the leopard attacked Meena early on Monday. — PTI



Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mehbooba Mufti meets the displaced families and victims of cross-border shelling in Poonch sector of Jammu on Monday. — PTI

Have mercy on people of J&K: Mufti to India, Pak

YUSUF JAMEEL  
SRINAGAR, MARCH 19

A day after five of a family were killed and 12 other civilians were injured in the mortar shelling along the line of control, Jammu and Kashmir chief minister, Mehbooba Mufti, on Monday asked New Delhi and Islamabad to show mercy on the people of the State. Talking to reporters after visiting Balakot area in Poonch district where a 45-year-old villager Muhammad Ramzan and his four family members were killed and two others wounded in Pakistani shelling, the chief minister said, “I request both India and Pakistan to show mercy and be kind to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. I want to appeal to Prime Minister,

The two sides must respect the (November 2003) ceasefire agreement

— Mehbooba Mufti, Chief minister J&K

Narendra Modi, and the rulers of Pakistan to stop this shelling. The two sides must respect the (November 2003) ceasefire agreement.” She said that it were the people living on the two sides of the de facto border who bear the brunt of the active hostilities between the facing troops. “It is the people of Jammu and Kashmir who have been at the receiving end. The Partition of the

subcontinent continues to haunt the people of the State,” she said. Taking a dig at both, she said two countries were not able to build roads and yet they were spending huge sums of money on acquiring weaponry. The chief minister after consoling with the relatives of the five civilians handed over cheques of ₹2.5 million as ex gratia to the next of kin of the deceased. She also gave a cheque of ₹300,000 each for meeting the educational expenses of deceased Ramzan’s daughters Noorain Akhtar (14) and Marin Akhtar (7) who were critically injured in the incident. She also announced bearing of all expenses coming on their treatment.

CBI charges ex-Canara bank CMD of cheating, forgery

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 19

The CBI on Monday charged former chairman-cum-managing director R.K. Dubey and two of the then executive directors of the Canara Bank of cheating and forgery in the alleged loan default of over ₹68 crore sanctioned in 2013. Sources in the agency said the CBI filed chargesheet in the Tis Hazari Court, against Dubey, the then Executive Directors (Ashok Kumar Gupta and VS Krishna Kumar), and two directors of the Occasional Silver Company Ltd (Kapil Gupta and Raj Kumar Gupta) in the case. The agency alleged that Guptas knew Dubey and used the connection in

Two of the then executive directors of Canara Bank also held for cheating, forgery in the alleged loan default of over ₹68 crore sanctioned in 2013

getting loans. It is alleged that the CMD directed subordinate officers to favour the Kamala Nagar-based company in disbursing the loan, they added. The loans were disbursed within three months of being sanctioned in December 2013, sources said. The loans became Non-Performing Assets in September, 2014 within few months of being disbursed, they said. The accused allegedly cheated the Canara Bank to

the tune of approximately ₹68.38 crore. The CBI had earlier in 2016, registered a case against Occasional Silver Company limited and its directors. “It was alleged that the said private company, dealing in wholesale and retail trading of silver jewellery and articles, diamond, gold jewellery, imitation jewellery, gift items etc. had cheated Canara Bank to the tune of ₹68.38 crore through its accounts at Kamla Nagar, New Delhi branch of the Canara Bank”, said the agency in its probe report. The probe agency revealed that there was an alleged nexus between the bank officials with the borrower which led to the perpetration of the fraud.

‘Absence of security clearances make it impossible’ India denied visas to over 500 pilgrims: Pak

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI/ISLAMABAD, MARCH 19

The Indo-Pak diplomatic row continued unabated as Pakistan alleged that India had denied visas to over 500 Pakistani pilgrims who wanted to visit the Ajmer dargah in Rajasthan to participate in the Urs of Hazrat Khawaja Moinuddin Chishti.

Reacting to Pakistani allegations, the Indian government sources said that sometimes “such visits cannot take place in view of the prevailing circumstances and absence of requisite security clearances”. The government sources said, “Such visits are facilitated and promoted and visas granted after following due processes. There have been instances in the past when such visits did not take place from both sides.” Meanwhile, Pakistan, in a statement said, “Pakistan notes with deep disappointment the non-issuance of visas by India

‘Earlier, 192 Pakistani Zaireen could not participate in the Urs of Hazrat Khawaja Nizamuddin Aulia in Delhi from 1-8 January 2018, due to the non-issuance of visas by India’

for the visit of the 503 Pakistani Zaireen (pilgrims) to participate in the Urs of Hazrat Khawaja Moinuddin Chishti at Ajmer Sharif, India from 19-29 March 2018. The visit was to take place under the 1974 Pakistan-India Protocol on Visits to Religious Shrines and is a regular annual feature. As a result of this Indian decision, the Pakistani Zaireen have been deprived of the opportunity to participate in the Urs, which is of special significance. Earlier, 192 Pakistani Zaireen could not participate in the Urs of Hazrat

Khawaja Nizamuddin Aulia in Delhi from 1-8 January 2018, due to the non-issuance of visas by India.” Islamabad further said, “Besides being violative of the bilateral Protocol of 1974 and the basic human right to religious freedom, such measures also undermine the efforts aimed at improving the environment, increasing people-to-people contacts and normalising relations between the two countries. It is again ironic that this was done on the occasion of Urs of Hazrat Khawaja Moinuddin Chishti who has for centuries been the symbol of bringing communities closer to each other.” “During 2017, despite Pakistan’s offer to send a special train, Indian delays had resulted in Sikh pilgrims from India being unable to participate in the martyrdom anniversary of Guru Arjan Dev and the death anniversary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh,” the statement said.

‘Centre addressing a political problem with military means’

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR, MARCH 19

CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury on Monday said that the Central government is looking at J&K with the prism of security forces only. He said Kashmir is a political problem which ought to be addressed to through dialogue with all stakeholders. “Modi government tackles Kashmir through military means only,” he said while speaking at the opening session of a two-day conference of the party here. He said Kashmir is crown of India and to safeguard it is the duty of every Indian. “If crown has any problem, then it is

the problem of the whole country. We have been saying it within and outside the Parliament,” he said. Mr Yechury alleged that PDP-BJP government in J&K is “biggest contradiction”. He reiterated, “Ever since Modi government took over, Kashmir is being tackled through military means only.” He said, “I came here twice as a member of Parliamentary delegation. First time it was when UPA-II was in power. But the recommendations of the interlocutors were never implemented. Second time, Home Minister Rajnath Singh led a Parliamentary delegation to Kashmir. When we returned to Delhi, it

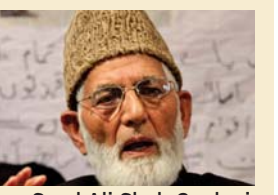
was discussed that the solution of Kashmir can be achieved through political process and not only through law and order. But ever since, not a single forward step was taken. Ban on pellet guns was raised in the Parliament and Home Minister made a statement, but later he retracted. NSAs of India and Pakistan are meeting in third country, but in Parliament, the government says it can’t hold dialogue with Pakistan. He asserted that Kashmir is a political problem and till talks are not held with all the stakeholders in the state and with Pakistan, this issue cannot be resolved.

Close aide replaces ailing Syed Geelani as TeH chief

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR, MARCH 19

In a significant development, Muhammad Ashraf Sehrai, a close confidante of Kashmir’s separatist patriarch Syed Ali Shah Geelani, on Monday replaced him as the chief of Tehrik-e-Hurriyat (TeH). TeH, virtually a breakaway wing of the duo’s parent organ-

ization Jamaat-e-Islamic, is the dominant constituent of the Hurriyat Conference faction led by octogenarian leader (Geelani). It was launched in 2004 after Geelani reached an “agreement” with the Jamaat. Sources in the TeH said that Geelani offered to step down as its chief due to his falling health. This has set at



rest all speculations about his preference on the issue of choosing his successor. Sections of media had earlier reported that Geelani may pickup his elder son Naem Geelani, a medical doctor by profession, to lead his party.

‘Harrassment of Indian diplomats in Pak still on’

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 19

Harassment of Indian diplomats in Islamabad continues unabated, with two more incidents on Monday following which India has clearly told Pakistan that “the safety and security of Indian High Commission, its officers, staff members and their families is the responsibility of the Government of Pakistan”. New Delhi also told Islamabad that that such incidents are a violation of the Vienna Convention while demanding a probe. Indian Government sources said two Indian diplomats were followed aggressively by two men in a car when they were on their way to a mall. Two other Indian diplomats in an official vehicle of the Indian High Commission were tailed by two people on a motorbike. Similar incidents of harassment also took place during the weekend as well.

Indian Government sources said, “On 19 March 2018, two officials of the High Commission went for shopping to Safa Gold Mall. They were aggressively followed by two persons in a car (Toyota Corolla) in close proximity at various locations. On 19 March 2018, two officials of the High Commission travelling in High Commission’s vehicle were aggressively followed while going to Super Market for shopping by two unknown persons on a motorbike. The website of the High Commission of India continues to be intermittently blocked. This is causing inconvenience and has affected normal functioning of the Mission.”

J&K: Jaish recruitment unit busted

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR, MARCH 19

The J&K police on Monday claimed busting a module of Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) which was trying to lure the Kashmiri youth into militancy. A police spokesman here said that during a joint operation, the J&K police, the Army and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) busted a “criminal network” involving the aish-e-Muhammad in Tral area of southern Pulwama district.

Sidda woos Lingayats in Karnataka

Continued from Page 1

centrestage last year when Mr Siddaramaiah promised to consider their demand. Mr Yeddyurappa, however, had said at a rally last year that there was no difference between Veerashaivas and Lingayats and that they were very much part of Hinduism. In what Karnataka law minister T.B. Jayachandra claimed was a unanimous decision, the Cabinet on Monday allowed Veerashaivas — or whoever agreed to follow social reformer Basavanna’s ideals — to be considered Lingayats. “After due deliberations and some discussions on concerns of various sections of society, the Cabinet has decided to accept the recommendations of the Karnataka State Minority Commission (KSMC),” Mr Jayachandra said. He said the commission, based on the report of an expert Nagamohan Das Committee, has recommended considering grant of recognition as religious minority to the Lingayat and Veerashaiva Lingayats (believers of Basava Tatva (philosophy) under Section 2 (d) of the Karnataka State Minorities Act. “It was also decided to forward the same to the central government for notifying under Section 2(c) of the Central Minority Commission Act,” he told reporters. Mr Jayachandra said the decision would not affect the rights and interests enjoyed by the existing minorities. At present, Lingayats get 5 per cent reservation as they are classified as an Other Backward Class. “The acceptance of the recommendation was in terms of the opinion of the

Minority Commission that proper recognition is to be made to Lingayats and Veerashaiva Lingayats (believers of Basava Tatva). It would also be in terms of the said opinion of the Commission and, also subject to the condition that such recognition would not affect the rights and interests of other minorities in the state,” Mr Jayachandra said. Lingayats, so called for their veneration of linga, the icon of Shiva, follow 12th-century saint-philosopher Basavanna who had rejected ritualistic worship and pre-eminence of the Vedas. The Veerashaivas sect of the community also worships Shiva idols and practises other Hindu customs. The Lingayats consider the Veershaivas to be part of Hinduism, while the Veerashaivas think the community was an ancient religion established by Shiva and Basavanna was one of its saints. One part of the community demands minority status for both Veerashaiva and Lingayats considering them the same, while another wants it only for the Lingayats. Slamming the decision, Opposition BJP leader in the Assembly Jagadish Shettar said the Siddaramaiah government was dividing the society for the sake of politics, keeping the election in mind and accused it of “igniting fire.” “The decision will boomerang on them,” he said. He also alleged that the Nagamohan Das committee, a government sponsored panel, was pressured to submit the report early ahead of the elections.

Sri Veera Someshwara Shivacharya Swami of Rambhagpuri Peetha of Balehonnur, one of the seers heading the Veerashaiva camps, condemned the Cabinet decision. He alleged that the recommendation may have got accepted following the “conspiracy of a few people,” but that Veerashaivas together will fight against it and are planning legal recourse. “Chief minister and others will have to face the disgrace of dividing the community. People will teach them a lesson,” he added. “At first it looked like the Veerashaiva Lingayats were against this move. But they will also get benefits for their educational institutions, like exemption from the Right to Education Act. Who would not want such benefits?” Mr Jayachandra said. “This is a devious and sinister design on the part of the Congress government on the eve of the elections”, the BJP said, but in a note of caution added that it would support any decision of Veerashaiva Mahasabha and the Siddaganga seer on the issue. “BJP stands for the united society consisting of Veerashaiva and Lingyats as both are the same and there is no difference at all in any respects,” the safe-guard party said. The KSMC had formed a seven-member committee, headed by retired high court judge H.N. Nagamohan Das in December last year that submitted its report on March 2. The committee in its report has said, “Lingayats in Karnataka may be considered as religious minority.”

No-trust motions

Continued from Page 1

package for Andhra Pradesh, an issue on which the TDP had quit the ruling NDA last week. As soon as the House met for Zero Hour after Question Hour was washed out, TRS and AIADMK members rushed into the Well carrying placards. Soon after papers were laid on the table amid unrelenting slogan-shouting by members, home minister Rajnath Singh said that the government was ready to discuss any issue. Some members had given notices for a no-confidence motion and the government was ready for a discussion on that as well, Mr Singh said, requesting all parties to cooperate so that the discussion can be taken up. The Speaker also repeatedly asked more than 25 members of the AIADMK and TRS, who were protesting inside the Well, to return to their seats. As the uproar continued, Ms Mahajan said she was duty-bound to take up the no-confidence motion notices, but could not do so as the House was not in order.

Since March 5, when Parliament reassembled for the Budget Session after the recess, both Houses have been facing disruptions every day. Last week, the Lok Sabha had passed the Finance Bill and appropriation bills without any discussion amid similar protests. The Rajya Sabha was adjourned for the day without transacting any business after parties from Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh disrupted proceedings over their state-specific demands. No sooner were the listed papers laid on the table, the Andhra parties led by the TDP and K.V.P. Ramachandra Rao of the Congress trooped into the Well. Rajya Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu repeatedly asked the members to allow the House to function, and called for taking up the listed Zero Hour mentions on various issues of public importance. But with members refusing to budge from their positions in the Well, he adjourned the House till Tuesday within 10 minutes of proceedings having begun.

Lalu guilty in fodder scam

Continued from Page 1

cattle in undivided Bihar in the 1990s when Lalu Yadav was the chief minister. The fifth case, related to the illegal withdrawal of ₹139.39 crore from Doranda treasury, is pending in a Ranchi court. In the sixth case, involving a ₹47-lakh fraud in the Bhagalpur treasury, a special CBI court in Patna is expected to begin trial soon. After Monday’s court decision, Lalu Yadav’s son Tejashwi Yadav said, “We will challenge the verdict in the high court.” Lalu Yadav’s wife Rabri Devi said, “We respect the verdict and have faith in the judiciary. But our prime concern right now is his health. He is under medication and treatment for various serious.” Lalu Yadav is admitted at the cardiology wing of Ranchi Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) after he fell ill at the Birsia Munda jail on Saturday. The fodder scam surfaced in 1996 and the first chargesheet against 38 accused was filed by the CBI on October 27, 1997. Lalu Yadav was made one of main accused in the scam.

When asked whether her party was also averse to joining hands with the Congress, she retorted, saying “Don’t put your words in my mouth. Whatever Mr Rahul has said, I fully agree with him. He has expressed his views. What is the harm in it? Rahul had expressed his views yesterday, but he has not asked what will be our view ... We will express our views,” she said. The political resolution adopted at the Congress’s plenary session, which concluded on Sunday, the party had said, “The Congress will adopt a pragmatic approach for co-operation with all like-minded parties and evolve a common workable programme to defeat the BJP-RSS in the 2019 elections.” — PTI





NEWSMAKERS OF THE WEEK

ANOTHER WEEK OF POLITICAL CHURN AS JAPAN'S PM WAS IN THE SPOTLIGHT AND CLOSER HOME THE MARAN BROTHERS GOT A HUGE RELIEF AS THEY WERE DISCHARGED IN THE TELECOM SCAM. AND IN PAKISTAN, MUMBAI TERROR MASTERMIND HAFIZ SAEED'S POLITICAL PARTY GOT THE COURT'S NOD.



DAYANIDHI MARAN

In a major relief to ex-Union telecom minister Dayanidhi Maran, his elder brother Kalanidhi Maran and five others, a special CBI court on March 14 discharged them from the illegal telephone exchange scam. The verdict comes as a shot in the arm for Marans, who have already been discharged in the Aircel-Maxis case. After the verdict, Dayanidhi said that he was happy that justice has triumphed and he now stands vindicated.



IRRFAN KHAN

The 51-year-old actor on Friday, through his Twitter handle revealed that he has been diagnosed with 'neuroendocrine tumour' which could metastasise into cancer. The actor also clarified in the post, "The journey of this is taking me out of the country, and I request everyone to continue sending their wishes. As for the rumours that were floated Neuro is not always about the brain and googling is the easiest way to do research."



SHINZO ABE

In a revelation that could have dramatic implications for Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's administration, the finance ministry has admitted to making deletions to 14 documents related to the 2016 sale of land to a close friend of the PM at a price said to be around one tenth of its normal value. The deleted sections include the names of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his wife. After the revelations, Mr Abe offered his apologies to the people.



HAFIZ SAEED

Milli Muslim League (MML), JuD chief and Mumbai attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed's new political party, will launch its manifesto on March 23, following a Pakistani court's decision upholding its registration as a political party ahead of polls this year. Saeed, had kept a low profile after the government had taken over all the movable and immovable assets of his Jamaat-ud-Dawah and Falah-i-Insaniyat Foundation (FIF) and frozen their bank accounts.



PIERCE BROSNAN

Hollywood actor Pierce Brosnan, who ran into rough weather with his appearance in an advertisement of a pan masala brand, has stated that he was "cheated" by the company which kept him in the dark about the "hazardous" nature of the product. In a written reply to the Delhi State Tobacco Control Cell, the actor said, "that he got cheated by the company as they did not disclose the hazardous nature of the product," additional director (health) S.K. Arora said.

Army says 68% of weapons outdated

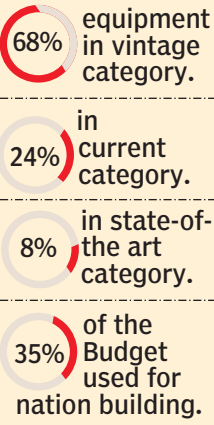
China, Pakistan on spree of equipping armed forces: Army

In a strong indictment of the inadequate budgetary allocation for the Army, Vice-Chief of Army Staff (VCOS) Lt. Gen. Sarath Chand told the parliamentary panel on defence that Budget 2018-19 has 'dashed' all hopes of modernisation of the force which is saddled with equipment of which more than two-third is 'vintage'.

With the ongoing Doklam issue, China has become increasingly assertive and there has been a rise in patrolling and transgressions. To add to this the Army has been facing attempts from Pakistan to launch suicide attacks on camps in Kashmir. Recently the emergency in Maldives is also an area of concern. The Army candidly shared that the possibility of a two-front war is a 'reality', and while both of India's neighbours are on a spree of modernising their armed forces, India has not paid attention.



EQUIPMENT REALITY



25 'Make in India' defence projects that are currently in the pipeline may not roll out due to fund crunch.

₹21,338 cr Allocation for modernisation insufficient.

DEPENDENCY ON FOREIGN SUPPLIERS FOR MILITARY HARDWARE

₹2,40,814.22 cr

Total value of 87 contracts signed during the last three years and current year (upto 30 November 2017).

₹1,16,522.89 cr

Value of 19 contracts signed with Indian vendors.

₹1,24,291.33 cr

Value of contracts signed with 8 foreign vendors.

Major Defence equipment imported in the last 3 years and current year.

Russia: Rockets, simulator and component level repair facility for tanks.

Israel: Laser designation pods, radars, pods for aircraft, radios, weapons for garuds and missiles.

USA: Aircraft, helicopters, missiles, artillery guns and simulators

France: Aircraft, ammunition, Bimodular Charge System (BMCS) High Zone Modules of artillery guns.

VINTAGE WEAPONS

Assault rifles: The army still uses the Indian Small Arms System rifles, which were inducted in 1988. For the past 30 years the Indian Army has been lugging this rifle around.

Artillery: The modernisation program, has been stalled since the 1980s. The three projects, involving 155mm howitzers of 52 inch and 32 inch calibers. Some of these were supposed to be self-propelled, some towed and some a mix of both. An Israeli and French firm were shortlisted for

the towed 155mm guns, but they are still pending clearance.

Armored warfare: Presently the vintage Russian T-72s and BMP-1 and two combat vehicles are in use. The Army wanted at least 1,000 of the T-72s and 1,000 of the BMPs upgraded, which meant adding night vision capabilities, a new fire control system and better engines. But budgetary clearances were not given.

Helicopters: Presently the Army uses vintage French helicopters. But what is really needed is a twin-engine machine and they the Russian Kamov was zeroed in on. However, allegations of kickbacks in the deal stalled the process.

AIR CRASHES SHATTER CALM OF 2018

It's been only two and a half months into 2018 and the world has seen already seen three deadly major airline crashes that killed nearly 208 passengers.

In 2017, the aviation industry saw 44 fatalities on board aircraft and 35 on the ground and it was considered one of the best years ever.

The jet era began around the 50s and 60s has seen no stopping. On every single day there are more than 100,000 scheduled flights.

The airline industry with its ever-increasing passenger numbers and complexity has adapt to changes in technology, growth, congestion, staffing, infrastructure, weather patterns and evolving threats such as terrorism and the use of drones.

March 16: A U.S. military helicopter crashed in western Iraq near the city of Qaim. Dead: 7 U.S. troopers

March 12: A US-Bangla Airlines aircraft caught fire after it careened off the runway and ploughed into a football field while landing at Nepal's Tribhuvan International Airport. Dead: 51

March 12: A private jet carrying Mina Basaran, daughter of Turkish businessman Huseyin Basaran and seven of her friends crashed in the mountainous region of Iran while returning from the UAE after her hen party celebrations. Dead: 11

Feb. 18: Iran Aseman Airlines ATR 72-212 crashed in a mountainous area near Yasuj in Iran 10 minutes from its destination. Dead: 65

Feb. 11: Saratov Airlines Antonov aircraft crashed near Stepanovskoye in Russia a few minutes after takeoff. Dead: 71

RUSSIA, UK ENGAGED IN A BATTLE OF NERVES

British Prime Minister Theresa May on March 14 held Russia responsible for the nerve agent attack against a former Russian spy and his daughter as she expelled 23 Russian diplomats and suspended high-level bilateral contact.

The escalating international scandal is unfolding as former Russian double agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia remain in critical condition after exposure to the Soviet-designed chemical Novichok on March 4 in the English city of Salisbury. May promised a "united stance" as she visited the scene of the attack for the first time on March 15 after expelling 23 Russian diplomats. In a rare

joint statement, the leaders of Britain, France, Germany, and the US condemned the attack as an "assault on UK sovereignty". The Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov called Britain's position "absolutely irresponsible."

In a retaliatory move over British accusations that the Kremlin orchestrated a nerve toxin attack, Russia expelled 23 British diplomats on Saturday. Russia also said, it was shutting down the activities of the British Council and withdrawing agreement for Britain to operate a consulate-general in St Petersburg.

Hawkings, a star that went out into the cosmos

The brilliant physicist, Stephen Hawking, passed away at 76 on March 14 in Cambridge, England. Hawking was known to push the limits — in his intellectual life, as well as in his professional and personal life left many in awe. In his 55 years, he became the world's most famous scientist since Albert Einstein for his work exploring the mysteries of space, time and black holes despite being wheelchair-bound and only able to communicate using a computer and his famous voice synthesizer.

APPEARING ON TV

The twice married Cambridge-based scientist, embraced popular culture and appeared in The Simpsons, The Big Bang Theory, Star Trek, Futurama and Little Britain. He said then, that he embraced popular culture because he wanted to make science more mainstream and encourage the world to look up at the stars and not down at your feet.

BOOKS

Hawkings wrote or co-wrote 15 books all in the face of severe health problems.

On God in 2010: It is not necessary to invoke God to light the blue touch paper and set the universe going.

On euthanasia in June 2006: The victim should have the right to end his life, if he wants. But I think it would be a great mistake. However bad life may seem, there is always something you can do, and succeed at. While there's life, there is hope.

On intellectual showboating in 2004: People who boast about their IQ are losers.

FULL CIRCLE

Death: His death came on Pi Day (3/14), which also happens to be the 139th birth anniversary of Albert Einstein's.

Birth: January 8, 1942 coincides with the 300th anniversary of the death of Galileo, the Italian astronomer whose contributions played a large part in shaping the scientific revolution but also the very important rock opera, "Bohemian Rhapsody."



SAILING TOGETHER



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with French President Emmanuel Macron and Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath take a boat ride on the Ganga from Assi Ghat to the Dashashwamedh Ghat in Varanasi on Monday.

14 pacts signed to boost defence and nuclear energy.

Deals with companies including Safran, Spice Jet, Suez, Air Liquide and Sterlite.

LONG FRIENDSHIP India and France share a 20-year-old strategic partnership.

1998: When India conducted its nuclear tests and was isolated by the world, France was the only G7 country that did not impose sanctions.

\$11bn is the bilateral trade between India and France.

1,000 French companies are operating in India and have invested close to \$7bn.

Lotus wilts in UP bypolls, loses two Lok Sabha seats

In a stunning blow to the BJP ahead of the 2019 general elections, the party lost bypolls to all the three Lok Sabha seats it contested, including its bastion Gorakhpur, and Phulpur in Uttar Pradesh, besides Araria in Bihar. This came as a shock for the saffron party as it had just scripted history by its surprise win in the north-eastern states. In fact, the one message that has come out of this defeat is that it will be a tough road ahead for the BJP in 2019 if the regional parties come together. In Uttar Pradesh, which is seen to be the road to victory in the Lok Sabha elections, the SP-BSP came together after a similar experiment in 1993 in the aftermath of the Babri Masjid demolition. A consolidation of OBC, Dalit and Muslim votes powered SP candidates to victory in the bypolls.



BSP president Mayawati and Samajwadi Party leader Ram Govind Chaudhary exchange greetings in Lucknow on March 14.

274 BJP's current tally in the Lok Sabha.

282 was the BJP's tally in 2014 when it had won.

10 LS SEATS BJP LOST

Amritsar, Srinagar, Malappuram, Gurdaspur, Ajmer, Alwar, Uluberia, Gorakhpur, Phulpur, Araria

HIGH-PROFILE SEAT

GORAKHPUR is significant for the BJP with Adityanath representing the seat in the Lok Sabha five times. Before him, his mentor Yogi Awaideyanath was MP from the seat.

NO-CONFIDENCE AGAINST NDA

The Telugu Desam and YSR Congress on Friday served separate notices to move no-confidence motions against the four-year-old NDA government. The notices, however, were not taken up by Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan due to pandemonium in the House.

On March 16 morning, Y.V. Subba Reddy and others from the YSRC and Thota Narasimham and others from the TD gave the notices against the NDA government after

finance minister Arun Jaitley expressed the government's inability to grant Special Category Status to Andhra Pradesh.

Mr Asaduddin Owaisi, AIMIM chief and MP from Hyderabad, also signed the no-trust notice given by the TD. This is the first time that the BJP-led NDA government is facing a no-confidence motion.

After the LS was convened, the Speaker informed the House that she has received two notices for a no-confidence motion.

ON LEAVING EARTH

Hawking had hoped to leave Earth's atmosphere altogether someday, a trip he often recommended to humans. In 2008 he said, "In the long run the human race should not have all its eggs in one basket, or on one planet. I hope we can avoid dropping the basket until then."

WARNINGS

Climate change: Hawking's main fears for the planet was global warming. He had said, "Next time you meet a climate change denier, tell them to take a trip to Venus. I will pay the fare." He also believed that President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from

the Paris Climate Agreement has doomed the planet.

Artificial intelligence: The genie is out of the bottle. I fear that AI may replace humans altogether. If people design computer viruses, someone will design AI that improves and replicates itself. This will be a new form of life that outperforms humans.

Aggression: Hawking had warned that humanity's biggest failing is aggression and could destroy us. And that the development of military technology and weapons of mass destruction could make this instinct even more dangerous.

Dr Hawking was a brilliant and extraordinary mind — one of the great scientists of his generation whose courage, humour and determination to get the most from life was an inspiration.

— THERESA MAY, UK PM

His theories unlocked a universe of possibilities that we & the world are exploring. May you keep flying like superman in microgravity, as you said to astronauts on @Space-Station in 2014.

— NASA







# How long must IAF wait for its new fighter?



Shankar Roychowdhury

While many issues of common interest and concern to both countries were discussed during French President Emmanuel Macron's recent visit to India, it was clear from the outset that the primary focus would be on one overarching background theme: India's acquisition of the Dassault Rafale fighter jet the future medium multi-role combat aircraft for the gravely fighter-impooverished and equipment-undernourished Indian Air Force, desperately seeking a replacement for its aged MiG-21 fleet. It is with this in mind that soon after assuming office, one of the earliest decisive steps taken by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was to cut the Gordian knot and finalise the acquisition of an initial batch of 36 Rafale fighters for the Indian Air Force through direct negotiations with Dassault Aircraft Corporation. The PM himself pushed the deal through, seemingly oblivious of its tortured historical background. The case for early acquisition of such an aircraft had been dragging on since 2008, and the almost peremptory decision to acquire the Rafale was a bold, perhaps even reckless step, given the fraught, bitterly adversarial political environment in India.

The Russian MiG-21 was a sturdy, faithful warhorse which had seen the Indian Air Force through the Bangladesh war of 1971 and the Kargil con-

flict of 1999. But it had aged much beyond its service life, and was now regarded as a totally unforgiving "widow maker" for its tragic record of fatal accidents. The Indian Air Force had long decided that the MiG-21 had to be replaced at the earliest.

The process to select such an aircraft was begun by a team of test pilots of the Indian Air Force (and there are none better in the world) who flight-tested and technically evaluated six competing aircraft which had been lined up behind the starter's tapes for the Indian Air Force sweepstakes. The participants were the Eurofighter Typhoon, Russia's MiG-35, the Dassault Rafale from France, the Saab Viggen from Sweden and the F-16 Block-D Viper and F-18 from the United States, and the trophy was the glittering \$10 billion MMCA (Medium-Multi Role Combat Aircraft) deal. Extensive flight testing and technical evaluations were conducted under the severe summer and winter operational conditions prevalent in the Indian environment. Two aircraft emerged as the winner and runner-up respectively —

**Defence has never been a particularly important focus of successive governments in India, and defence procurement, no matter how urgent, has always been regarded as fodder for cynical political bargaining**

the Rafale, which was in service only in the "Armee de l'aire", the official designation of the French Air Force; and the Eurofighter Typhoon, designed as a common fighter aircraft for Nato. The actual flying and technical evaluations by the IAF test pilots were all mere preliminaries — the hard core of the process were the commercial and contractual negotiations, especially the complex financial offsets, which are often the stumbling blocks in almost all such cases. This protracted process was applied to the Rafale as well, notwithstanding the operational urgency. In the event, the Rafale, hitherto an unfamiliar entity in India,

was the surprise winner of the competition.

France has traditionally driven a hard bargain. The French have been expensive but dependable suppliers of world-class technology, which have been used by the Indian armed forces to great effect in all of India's wars since Independence. These include the AMX-13 light tanks, which during the Sino-Indian border war of 1962 were airlifted to Chushul in Ladakh at a height of 14,232 feet; Mystere fighter-bombers in the India-Pakistan war of 1965 and the Mirage 2000 fighter-bombers, which sanitised the airspace over Kargil in 1999. Defence has never been a particularly important focus of successive governments in India, and defence procurement, no matter how urgent, has always been regarded as fodder for cynical political bargaining. Politicians of all parties have never hesitated to shoot off their mouths on military issues, which neither they nor their pretentiously-designated "high commands" have the slightest clue about. In this case, the political worthies have even said that the Rafale is "old technology", which has

not been effective in Libya or Sub-Saharan Africa, where these aircraft are operating in a ground support role with the French intervention forces in Mali and elsewhere. Others have sought the financial details of such contracts purely as political ammunition, ignoring the insistence of many multinational armament manufacturers on secrecy clauses in any contracts entered into.

Negotiations have been in progress for an extended period, but now appear to be in a deadlock. Meanwhile, fighter pilots of the Indian Air Force, as also of Indian naval aviation, some of the finest in the world, look anxiously skywards, hoping for manna from heaven to come their way in the form of a good fighting aircraft, while their opponents next door get copious transfusions of Chinese technology, some of which is said to be world-class, at vastly subsidised "friendship" prices.

But the past is irrelevant, and its memories are insufficient now. Only the future is important, and India needs to get its act together, and quickly. Let there be no doubt — India continues to function in a two-and-

a-half front threat situation, and there are no visible signs that the situation will wind down in the foreseeable future or that India's involvement in its near abroad region is likely to end anytime soon. Weapons systems like the Rafale are urgently needed for our armed forces to confront all these situations. They will therefore have to be procured. Meanwhile, the contentious and contrarian "attack politics" at home are dragging the armed forces into venomous and increasingly personalised political mud-slinging. All these should not be relevant to the defence procurement process, but nevertheless are a ground reality which impose added caution in any defence negotiations with foreign commercial entities. The overall result, of course, is a long delay in the modernisation of our armed forces.

It seems the Indian Air Force will have to wait for an extended period before succour arrives. What then is the answer? Make in India?

*The writer is a former Chief of Army Staff and a former member of Parliament*



Francis Gonsalvis

## Sharing happiness

Remember to look up at the stars and not down at your feet. Try to make sense of what you see and wonder about what makes the universe exist. Be curious. And however difficult life may seem, there's always something you can do," said Stephen Hawking, the 76-year old astrophysicist, who defied motor neuron disease and died recently. Reflecting on UN's "share happiness" theme to celebrate "International Day of Happiness", today, Hawking's words are worth reflecting upon.

Hawking's relentless search for the "Ultimate" is amazing. Each one of us constantly strives for some "Ultimate" — not necessarily some Absolute or God, but anything that makes life meaningful. A baby might desire to be cuddled by mom, an actress might yearn for a box-office hit, someone on death-bed might long to prolong his life, and a seeker might pray for a *darshan* of God. Each of these is, in a way, an Ultimate that keeps one looking up and moving on. Accomplishing such goals is good; but life offers much more.

"Remember to look up at the stars and not down at your feet" comes from someone who was strapped to a chair, face contorted, limbs debilitated, yet dared look up beyond the stars to galaxies and black holes. The wonders of "beyond" were then expressed with down-to-earth images understandable even to those unschooled in the pure sciences. Had Hawking looked down at his feet, he'd have cursed God for inflicting upon him so dreaded a disease. He didn't.

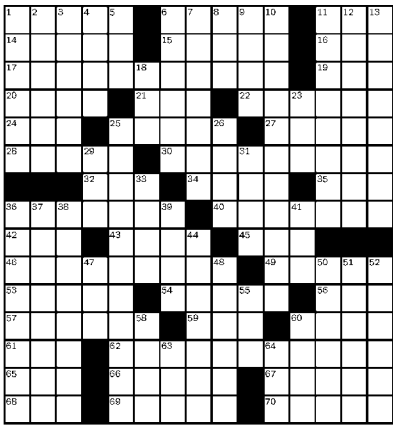
"Make sense of what you see and wonder about what makes the universe exist," can inspire us to look within and look around with gladness and gratitude at all that exists. Do you realise how precious you are and how much you *have*? Count your innumerable blessings and be happy, be grateful. Many people lack even the basic necessities of life and yet are happy and grateful.

"Be curious" is a catchword of the greatest inventors and seekers. Ever restless with questions — Who? When? Where? Why? How? — they inevitably evolve ingenious possibilities for living and loving. Genuine seekers never rest content with their own happiness but do little things to make this world a happier place — especially for the unhappy victims of poverty, evil and violence.

"There's always something you can do," even if you find life difficult, here-and-now. Your little difficulty is but a speck of dust in the immense landscape of life laid out by a Great God — that *Aadi-and-Anaadi* — who created you to be happy. So, look in the mirror. Smile. Whisper the pledge proposed by the UN for this International Day of Happiness: "I will try to create more happiness in the world around me." Don't worry, be happy!

*The writer is a professor of theology. He can be contacted at [dragons@gmail.com](mailto:dragons@gmail.com)*

### THE NYT CROSSWORD



**ACROSS**  
1 Rebound  
6 Lady \_\_\_\_\_ Ashley, Jake Barnes's love in "The Sun Also Rises"

11 Interregnum  
14 Chilling  
15 Like the planets beyond the asteroid belt  
16 Chemical suffix  
17 Rooftop heist?  
19 Travel org. with an eTix app  
20 "If you ask me," to texters  
21 Org. that discourages traveling  
22 Flowerless plants  
24 Diamond club  
25 Some roles in the Jack Benny film "College Holiday"  
27 Marathon leader?  
28 Dateless, say  
30 Handle engineer duties?  
32 Bird that has one long talon on each foot for fighting  
34 Pear variety  
35 Preschooler

36 Last at Daytona, say  
40 N.H.L. team that became the Hurricanes in 1997  
42 "Mazel \_\_\_\_\_!"  
43 "No \_\_\_\_\_" ("I'm fine")  
45 My Chemical Romance genre  
46 Della or Picabo?  
49 Openings at a day spa?  
53 Jewel case insert  
54 Bright lights  
56 Response to "Madam, I'm Adam" that is itself a palindrome  
57 Alaskan bear  
59 \_\_\_\_\_ favor  
60 Reindeer in "Frozen"  
61 "Wheel of Fortune" buy  
62 Sandwich shops?  
65 Study  
66 Orchestra tuners  
67 Pull some strings?  
68 "Listen \_\_\_\_\_!" (Cockney cry)

69 "Forget it!" ... or a hint to 17 -, 30-, 46- and 62-Across  
70 Gripes  
**DOWN**  
1 Premium Cuban cigar  
2 Category in a guessing game  
3 "You betcha!"  
4 Number above "Operador" on un teléfono  
5 La Méditerranée, e.g.  
6 Tackle box item  
7 Start of a children's rhyme  
8 It lasts trois mois  
9 Contract period  
10 Events for prospective pro athletes  
11 Idaho, with "the"  
12 Toward the front, anatomically  
13 Group rallied by Mao Zedong

18 Fish at a Hawaiian barbecue  
23 Nikon product, for short  
25 One who has concrete plans for the day?  
26 \_\_\_\_\_ globe  
29 Fresh out of the box  
31 Queens stadium name  
33 \_\_\_\_\_ interface  
36 Defense fence  
37 Cockney, e.g.  
38 Trite  
39 Typical college freshman  
41 John  
44 Home of lanternfish and giant squids  
47 "\_\_\_\_\_ gather"  
48 Foot, baby-style  
50 Election do-over  
51 No matter whether  
52 Has an inkling  
55 Major group HQ'd in Fairfax, Va.

58 2016 animated film "\_\_\_\_ and the Two Strings"  
60 Wave to a math teacher?  
63 Opposite of stern  
64 Moonshiner's vessel







‘Facebook addiction disorder’ is a new mental disorder identified by psychologists

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Speeches by Sheikh being watched: PM

New Delhi: Prime Minister Indira Gandhi is understood to have told the consultative committee of Parliament on external affairs, that both the Centre and the Jammu and Kashmir governments were watching carefully the utterances and activities of Sheikh's activities so warranted. Indira Gandhi is also understood to have said that too much importance should not be given to Sheikh Abdullah. The Kashmir leader's recent utterances, in which he had said that India was in "forcible occupation" of Kashmir were raised by Congress member Thirumal Rao. Rao is reported to have told Gandhi that the Sheikh seemed to have belied all the expectations of the 300 members of Parliament who had pleaded for his release and indulged again in anti-Indian speeches and would not even declare himself as an Indian national.

— PTI

IN BRIEF

Living across frontlines in South Sudan

Leer, South Sudan: Nyakol was 15, healthy and strong when South Sudanese soldiers attacked her hometown of Leer, forcing her to flee with her mother into the surrounding swamps. Not for the first time, government troops tore through the northern rebel stronghold, killing, kidnapping and raping, so Nyakol was lucky to escape, but she contracted cerebral malaria while in hiding. Treatment for the disease came too late, leaving her brain-damaged and unable to walk, talk or eat without help. In the nearly three years since, Nyakol's mother, Nyaduol, has carried her to safety numerous times as fighting has continued. Their most recent uprooting was just last month when they managed to cross the shifting front lines, arriving exhausted and hungry in rebel-held Touch Riak, less than 16 kilometres (10 miles) from Leer. The constant upheaval of conflict, illness and starvation has left Nyakol severely malnourished: her weight is that of a two-year-old, her skin hanging loose on protruding bones. South Sudan's civil war began in late 2013 and has overwhelmingly affected civilians who are treated as prey by soldiers from all sides. Rape, torture, murder and starvation have come to define the conflict, while efforts to bring peace have failed. Leer has been the epicentre of this man-made crisis. The town was once home to rebel leader Riek Machar and dominated by his Nuer tribe, and so was a target for government forces. The violent tug-of-war between government and rebel forces has scattered most of the population to places like Touch Riak, the village where Nyakol and her mother are staying, squatters at a tarpaulin hospital. Leer is, for now, under government control and so off-limits to Nyakol. "Touch Riak is still in the hands of the opposition and during the rainy season it becomes an island. That's why we feel safe here," said Nyaduol as she tended to her invalid daughter, lying prone on the makeshift clinic's dirt floor. Leer is also largely abandoned by international aid agencies, who have not returned since the major government offensive of 2015, unwilling to take the risk of operating in the area after their compounds were serially looted and their staff threatened. Instead, local South Sudanese charities are on the ground, while the UN's World Food Programme (WFP) drops sacks of food from the air. "The situation is tense and it's difficult to move," said Gatkan David Jal of the Universal Intervention and Development Organisation.

— AFP

Ex-Samsung maverick becomes S. Korea's #MeToo champion

Jung Hawon focus

Lee Eun-eui complained to the Samsung management in 2005 about a boss who had repeatedly touched and verbally harassed her for years. After receiving no assistance, she filed a lawsuit of sexual harassment and workplace bullying against Samsung that she would go on to win.

Seoul, March 19: The ground for the wave of #MeToo accusations sweeping socially conservative South Korea was laid by a defiant saleswoman who took on the corporate might of Samsung, won a harassment case against her boss and changed career to become a lawyer.

Lee Eun-eui now focuses on helping victims of sex abuse herself. The #MeToo movement against the abuse of women at first met a muted response in the country, where victims fear losing their jobs and public humiliation if they complain.

But a growing number of South Korean women have come forward to accuse powerful figures in fields from politics and the arts to education and religion.

Ms Lee was a pioneer. An elite salesperson at Samsung Electro-Mechanics, a components unit of the giant conglomerate, she complained to management in 2005 about a boss who had repeatedly touched and verbally harassed her for years.

The supervisor was quietly moved to another firm with no formal investigation, but Ms Lee was labelled an agitator who "backstabbed" her superior.

"I was given no work for more than a year... My employee evaluation scores dived," she said.

She was transferred to another department where the manager told her he did not like her or want to work with her, "so other colleagues also refused to talk to me" — plunging her into depression.

Ms Lee's options, it seemed, were to resign, or "just stay and quietly suffer the career setbacks", she said. But the 44-year-old's soft-spoken manner



This file photo shows then Samsung worker and now lawyer, Lee Eun-eui, during an interview in Seoul. The ground for the wave of #MeToo accusations sweeping socially conservative South Korea was laid by a defiant saleswoman who took on Samsung, won a harassment case against her boss and changed career to become a lawyer.

— AFP

belies her determination. "I did nothing wrong," she said. "So I decided to fight."

She filed a complaint of sexual harassment and workplace bullying at the National Human Rights Commission of Korea, following up with a lawsuit.

Samsung dominates the world's 11th-largest economy, with the group's total revenue equivalent to about a fifth of the nation's GDP and its lobbying power second to none — so much so that South Korea is sometimes dubbed the "Republic of Samsung".

Samsung denied both charges, but the commission ruled in Ms Lee's

favour and in 2010 a court awarded her 37.5 million won (\$34,000) in damages.

Ms Lee's rare public battle against the behemoth — and even rarer legal victory — made headlines in a society where patriarchal values remain deeply ingrained despite economic and technological advances.

South Korea is regularly at the bottom of rankings related to the gender pay gap or female representation in senior roles among the OECD club of advanced economies.

It was also named the worst place for working women among 29 advanced nations in this year's "Glass Ceiling

Index" by the Economist. During the lawsuit, Ms Lee received many messages of support from female Samsung staff thanking her for driving management to respond better to complaints.

"This feeling that my lonely fight was bearing fruit somewhere out there gave me so much strength," she said.

After winning her case she quit Samsung, studied law and set up her own firm in 2014. Now about 70 percent of the cases she handles involve sexual harassment at work or school.

Ms Lee's clients have included an actress who had nude images included

in a film without her consent, and a sex worker who accused a K-pop star of raping her in a toilet.

"Many of my clients come to me knowing my past," she said.

Prosecutor Seo Ji-hyeon appeared on television in January to talk about sexual harassment by a superior and the professional setbacks she suffered after reporting it.

Her interview opened a floodgate of similar revelations by women who accused figures ranging from politicians to writers to film directors, and brought down prominent men, including a would-be presidential candidate.

While inquiries to Ms

South Korea is regularly at the bottom of rankings related to the gender pay gap or female representation in senior roles among the OECD club. It was also named the worst place for working women among 29 advanced nations in this year's "Glass Ceiling Index" by the Economist.

Lee's firm have increased, she said, South Korea's fundamentals have yet to change.

Victims who spoke out against powerful figures have been widely praised for bravery, but Ms Lee said: "We need to pay attention to victims around us rather than those you only see on TV." "Samsung's response to my sexual harassment complaint was really bad," she added, "but I am afraid that the situation at other companies in the South is even worse."

"Many firms view these women who complain about sexual harassment as just tiring and annoying," she explained, "someone with issues, who is oversensitive, or simply too loud".

Women's rights groups also accuse South Korean courts of treating sex offenders too leniently.

Under South Korean law rape is defined by whether there was "violence or intimidation" rather than an absence of consent — terms criticised by a UN convention earlier this month.

But Ms Lee suggests the law may be less at fault than the prosecutors and judges who apply it.

— AFP

‘King of spectacle’ Balich puts Sistine Chapel on stage

Catherine Marciano meanwhile

Used to making flashy spectacles that he deems as "artainment", Marco Balich is now entering into the artistic world of Michelangelo and his frescos of creation on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Balich has taken over Rome's symphony hall in to give the art masterpiece back to the people.



In this file photo, technicians attend a rehearsal of the show "Universal Judgment: Michelangelo and the Secrets of the Sistine Chapel," directed by Marco Balich at the auditorium via della Conciliazione near the Vatican.

— AFP

Rome, March 16: The producer of the Rio Olympics opening ceremony, Marco Balich, is used to making flashy spectacles, but entering into the artistic world of Michelangelo and his frescos of creation on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel may be his most ambitious project yet. Described as "artainment", Mr Balich's show, which premiered on Thursday, aims to take a new audience inside the Vatican's Sistine Chapel, one of Rome's most famous sites that is so swamped by camera-clicking tourists it can hardly be fully appreciated. Mr Balich has taken over Rome's former symphony hall in the hope of giving the art masterpiece back to the people of the eternal city.

"Rome is the only major European capital that doesn't have a permanent show about its own history," Mr Balich said. Using the techniques learned during his Olympic experiences he makes audiences feel as if they are sitting in the middle of the iconic chapel. High definition photographs provided by the Vatican Museums are projected onto the

stage, walls and ceiling of the hall, which have been covered with canvases.

Adam and Eve frolic in front of a close-up of a fresco of the Garden of Eden with plants climbing the walls toward the ceiling, while Noah's Ark heaves in a stormy deluge that soaks actors on stage.

"We've tried to apply the language and technology of the Olympics to a pillar of humanity," said Mr Balich. The show starts with blocks of rough marble sliding mysteriously around the stage, before Michelangelo appears revolving around the unhewn rocks, evoking "beauty" until a sculpture emerges from the grey mass. "Everything is in there," Balich says. "I seek beauty, the beauty is everything. It is my obsession," he said.

Next comes Pope Sixtus IV (1471-1484), who had called upon the great artists of his time like Perugino, Botticelli or Ghirlandaio.

Then in 1508 Michelangelo is summoned from his hometown of Florence to paint the ceiling of what we now call the Sistine Chapel, at the request of Pope Julius

II (1503-1513). Just 30 years old and up to that point a sculptor, he recoils at the madness of having to paint one thousand square-metres — 500 hundred days work — despite having no knowledge of fresco painting techniques. Three decades later and another patron pope, Clement VII (1523-1534), calls him back to the chapel to create his most famous fresco — the Last Judgement to paint and restore an old medieval chapel that would eventually be named after him.

"I want to talk to younger generations to teach them that beauty and art are an important way of learning about their own roots," says Balich.

"An hour is the attention span of the younger generation, if we tell the story well we can get them interested."

The grand finale of the show called Universal Judgement: Michelangelo and the Secrets of the Sistine Chapel is a prelude written by Sting, and sung in Latin by the British pop star, along with 16 minutes of narration approved by the Vatican.

— AFP

Character study: Taiwan's presidential calligraphers

Taipei, March 19: Deep in the high-ceilinged corridors of Taiwan's presidential office, calligraphers craft messages on behalf of the island's leaders as they seek to keep the traditional art live. Both the president and vice president appoint a personal scribe who creates everything from small notes to large scrolls, delivering congratulations and condolences to residents.

Yang Shu-wan is President Tsai Ing-wen's calligrapher, selected after applying for the position in 2016 when Tsai came to power. Her workshop is hung with large swathes of red or white sheets, freshly decorated with traditional Chinese ink strokes and drying over metal racks. "The style of characters should mirror the personality and I want to show the frank and unpretentious side of the president," Ms Yang, 59, said.

She explained that she had met the president a number of times and spoken with her shortly after the leader took office, when she praised how beautifully Ms Yang wrote her name.

"I also think she is personable and I want to show that other side of her through the calligraphy, using a script that is spirited and vivacious," Ms Yang said.

Ms Yang's brush set varies from thick to fine tips, enabling her to make bold or delicate marks on paper spread across a large wooden table, working with unwavering concentration.

Members of the public apply for the messages to mark birthdays from 80 and above, wedding anniversaries from 50 years as well as deaths of loved ones aged 70 or older.



This file picture shows Taiwan presidential calligrapher Yang Shu-wan picking a writing brush for her calligraphy in Taipei.

— AFP

Temples and schools also ask for the calligraphy tributes from the president, which are all sent out free of charge, to commemorate anniversaries and achievements. More than 11,000 such messages were issued by the presidential office last year.

Like most Taiwanese students, Ms Yang practised calligraphy when she was at school but did not take it up seriously until 20 years ago, when she was a stay-at-home mother.

Through practising rigorously for hours a day she began to win competitions and teach the art. Ms Yang said one of her most memorable messages on behalf of the president, who is an animal lover, was a tribute to a golden retriever named Cherry that toured schools to promote animal protection before dying of an illness.

She describes how her work gives her inner calm and balance, and helps accumulate good karma.

"I write condolences for a person who passed away at 112 years old and

congratulate a couple celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary," she said. "I have come to realise that there is no constant in life and we should cherish every moment."

Ms Yang sees calligraphy as one of the island's most important cultural assets and teaches the art to students as young as five.

Her views are echoed by Susan Huang, official calligrapher of vice president Chen Chien-jen, who says the art helps cultivate patience and persistence in children. The retired maths teacher, now 72, met Mr Chen at the Catholic church they both attend.

She says her characters are "balanced and calm" to reflect what she describes as Mr Chen's gentle nature and that she writes them as if they were for her own family seeing herself as a bridge between the government and the people.

"It gives me a great sense of accomplishment," she told AFP.

"I hope when people receive the messages I write, they will feel pleased or comforted."

— AFP





Pope Francis condemns men who frequent prostitutes as criminals who exploit women

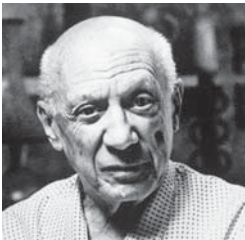
TODAY in HISTORY

Today is Tuesday, March 20, the 79th day of 2018. There are 286 days left in the year.

1600 The Linköping Bloodbath takes place on Maundy Thursday in Linköping, Sweden. The Dutch East India Company is established.



1616 Sir Walter Raleigh is freed from the Tower of London after 13 years of imprisonment. The Great Boston Fire of 1760 destroys 349 buildings. Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin is published. The Republican Party of the United States is organized in Ripon, Wisconsin. An earthquake destroys Mendoza, Argentina. Sung Chiao-jen, a founder of the Chinese Nationalist Party, is wounded in an assassination attempt and dies 2 days later. Albert Einstein publishes his general theory of relativity.



1923 The Arts Club of Chicago hosts the opening of Pablo Picasso's first United States showing, entitled Original Drawings by Pablo Picasso, becoming an early proponent of modern art in the United States. Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler ordered the creation of Dachau concentration camp as Chief of Police of Munich and appointed Theodor Eicke as the camp commandant. With a Musicians Union ban lifted, the first telecasts of classical music in the United States, under Eugene Ormandy and Arturo Toscanini, are given on CBS and NBC. Tunisia gains independence from France. The precursor of the European Space Agency, ESRO is established per an agreement signed on June 14, 1962. Libby Riddles becomes the first woman to win the 1,135-mile Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. Canadian paraplegic athlete and humanitarian Rick Hansen begins his circumnavigation of the globe in a wheelchair in the name of spinal cord injury medical research. The Food and Drug Administration approves the anti-AIDS drug, AZT.



1990 Ferdinand Marcos's widow, Imelda Marcos, goes on trial for bribery, embezzlement, and racketeering. Legoland California, the first Legoland outside of Europe, opens in Carlsbad, California. At least 52 people are killed and more than 250 injured in a wave of terror attacks across ten cities in Iraq. Four suspected Taliban members attack the luxurious Kabul Serena Hotel. A Solar eclipse, equinox, and a Supermoon all occur on the same day.

Transition period will be March 29, 2019 to Dec. 31, 2020

Britain, EU reach deal for Brexit transition

DANNY KEMP BRUSSELS, MARCH 19

Britain and the European Union on Monday reached a landmark deal on a transition phase that will last for nearly two years after the historic Brexit divorce next year, EU negotiator Michel Barnier said.

The two sides also agreed on a "backstop" solution for the thorny issue of the future of the Irish border, just weeks after Prime Minister Theresa May said no British Premier could ever accept such an idea.

After an "intensive" weekend of talks in Brussels, Mr Barnier said the two sides were "in agreement on a large part" of the divorce treaty governing the terms of Britain's departure after four decades of membership. "We have reached an agreement on the transition period," Barnier told a press conference with David Davis, Britain's Brexit minister.

The transition will begin on Brexit day — March 29, 2019 — and last until December 31, 2020, and during that period, Britain "will no longer participate in the European Union decision-making process," Mr Barnier said.

SEPARATION PROCEEDING



David Davis

Both sides wanted the transition deal so that it could be signed off by EU leaders at a summit later this week, allowing the unlocking of talks on the future British-EU relationship in April



Michel Barnier

The purpose of the transition period is twofold: to give businesses and citizens time to adjust to life after Brexit, and to give Britain and the EU more time to agree on a trade deal

"Nevertheless, it will preserve the benefits, the advantages of the single market and the customs union... and will therefore be required to respect all the European rules just like all member states do."

Mr Davis told the news conference that the transition deal "gives the certainty demanded by businesses and citizens across Britain and the European Union."

Both sides wanted the transition deal in place so

that it could be signed off by EU leaders at a Brussels summit later this week, allowing the unlocking of talks on the future British-EU relationship in April.

The purpose of the transition period is twofold: to give businesses and citizens time to adjust to life after Brexit, and to give Britain and the EU more time to agree on a trade deal.

Britain also agreed in

principle to the EU's "backstop" plan for the status of the Irish border, under which British-ruled Northern Ireland would remain part of the EU's customs union if there is no better idea.

The thorny issue will, however, require further talks to be fully resolved, the two sides said.

The EU insists that any divorce deal must ensure there is no "hard border" between EU member Ireland and Northern Ireland, saying it could compromise the 1998 peace accord that ended decades of sectarian violence in the British province.

Several weeks ago, May said "no UK prime minister could ever agree" to the plan, saying it would compromise Britain's constitutional integrity and effectively draw up a border between Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom.

The idea was also deemed "unacceptable" by the pro-British party in Northern Ireland that props up her government.

"We agreed today that the backstop solution must form part of the legal text of the withdrawal agreement," Mr Barnier said.

— AFP



A handout picture released by the official Facebook page of the Syrian presidency on Sunday shows President Bashar al-Assad posing for a photo with government troops in Eastern Ghouta. This is Assad's first trip to the former rebel enclave outside Damascus in years.

— AFP

British woman killed fighting alongside Kurd forces in Afrin

Beirut, March 19: A British woman fighting alongside Kurdish forces in the Syrian region of Afrin was killed in the Turkish-led offensive on the area, a spokeswoman for the forces said on Monday.

Anna Campbell was killed last week in the Afrin enclave, said Nisrin Abdallah, a spokeswoman for the Kurdish Women's Protection Units (YPJ). "She died on March 15, 2018 in Turkish shelling" on frontlines around Afrin city, Abdallah told AFP, adding that Campbell was 27 at the time of her death.

"We learned of her death on Sunday and communicated with her parents,"

— AFP



Anna Campbell

she said, confirming that Campbell was from Lewes in East Sussex.

Abdallah said Campbell joined the YPJ in May 2017 but had not been deployed to the front line until this month.

"After the attack on Afrin, she insisted on being sent there," Abdallah said.

— AFP

Turkey to expand Syria op to other Kurd-held towns

Ankara: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Monday vowed to expand Turkey's Syria campaign to other Kurdish-held areas up to the Iraqi border; a day after pro-Ankara forces ousted Kurdish militia from their former enclave of Afrin. "Now we will continue this process until we entirely eliminate this corridor, including in Manbij, Ayn al-Arab, Tel-Abyad, Ras al-Ayn and Qamishli," he said, referring to areas controlled by the YPG.

— AFP

Blast targets Hekmatyar's supporters as they leave a political rally Motorcycle bomb kills 4 in Afghanistan

Jalalabad (Afghanistan) March 19: A bomb on a motorcycle exploded near a political rally in eastern Afghanistan on Monday, killing at least four people and wounding 10 others, officials said.

The blast happened as supporters of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a notorious warlord and former Prime Minister, were leaving the rally at a football stadium in Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar province.

Hekmatyar, who returned to public life last year after signing a controversial peace deal with the Afghan government, was at the gathering but it was not clear if he or his



A member of the Afghan security forces and a medical staff assist an injured man walk to a hospital following a bomb blast in Jalalabad on Monday.

supporters were the target of the attack. Provincial governor's

spokesman Attaullah Khogyani said four people had been confirmed dead

and 10 wounded including two children.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the blast. Areas of restive Nangarhar, which borders Pakistan, are a stronghold for the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria group but Taliban fighters are also active there.

It was the latest deadly violence to strike war-torn Afghanistan as militant groups step up attacks and US and Afghan forces intensify air strikes and ground offensives.

The Taliban are facing growing calls to accept President Ashraf Ghani's offer of talks to end the 16-year conflict.

— AFP

French man faces charge of smuggling guns in Israel

Jerusalem, March 19: A French consulate worker faced charges on Monday of using an official car to smuggle dozens of guns from the Gaza Strip to the occupied West Bank in a case Israeli authorities called "very severe".

Israeli officials were quick to note that the worker from France's Jerusalem consulate acted on his own without his superiors' knowledge and that diplomatic relations between the two countries were not affected.

But the delicate case comes ahead of a planned visit next week to Israel and the Palestinian territories by French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian and French diplomats are sure to face questions over it.

The arrested French citizen and several Palestinian suspects are accused of belonging to a gun-running network that eventually sold the weapons to arms dealers, Israel's Shin Bet domestic security agency said in a statement.

It alleged that Romain Franck, 23, had taken advantage of reduced security checks for consular vehicles to transport the weapons out of the Palestinian enclave.

The Shin Bet said he was motivated by money. A total of nine suspects have been arrested and six were to be charged in court later on Monday, including Franck. — AFP

Taiwanese want activist be freed



Supporters of Taiwanese activist Lee Ming-che, who was jailed in China, march during a rally in Taipei, Taiwan, on Monday. Dozens of activists gathered for a demonstration to call on China to release Lee, who was sentenced to five years in prison on charges of subverting state power last November.

— AP

Drought, crop failure will increase in next 3 decades: World Bank 'Warming climate will displace millions soon'

Washington, March 19: The wave of refugees fleeing crop failures, droughts and rising sea levels will grow drastically over the next three decades if world governments do not intervene, the World Bank warned on Monday.

By 2050, 143 million "climate migrants" will face an "existential threat" and be displaced, the World Bank said in a new report. That includes 86 million in Sub-Saharan Africa, 40 million in South Asia and 17 million in Latin America.

These regions are home to more than half the developing world's population, and 2.8 percent of inhabitants are among

By 2050, 143 million 'climate migrants' will face an 'existential threat' and be displaced, the World Bank said in a new report. Report is the first to question problem of migration

those at risk, according to the report, which the bank said was the first to address the question of migration spurred by climate change.

Climate change has inexorably become an "engine of migration," forcing individuals, families and even whole com-

That includes 86 million in Sub-Saharan Africa, 40 million in South Asia and 17 million in Latin America. These regions are home to half the developing world population

munities to seek more viable homes, World Bank CEO Kristalina Georgieva said.

"Every day, climate change becomes a more urgent economic, social and existential threat to countries and their people," she said in a statement.

Bangla SC stays release of Zia in corruption case

Dhaka, March 19: Bangladesh's Supreme Court on stayed the release of former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia on bail in a corruption case under which she was sentenced to five years imprisonment, in a setback to her political ambitions in this year's general election.

Ms Zia, 72, was sentenced on February 8 in connection with the embezzlement of 21 million taka (about \$250,000) in foreign donations meant for the Zia Orphanage Trust, named after her late husband Ziaur Rahman, a military ruler-turned-politician.

In the same case, her son Tarique Rahman and four others were sentenced to 10 years in jail.

On March 12, the high court here granted the chairperson of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) a four-month interim bail.

However, on Monday a full bench of the Appellate Division led by Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain passed the order to stay until May 8 the High Court order which granted bail to Ms Zia in the graft case.

Following today's Supreme Court order, Zia will not be released from jail till May 8, Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) lawyer Advocate Khurshid Alam Khan was quoted as saying by Daily Star.



Khaleda Zia

Zia, 72, was sentenced on February 8 in connection with the embezzlement of 21 million taka (about \$250,000) in foreign donations meant for the Zia Orphanage Trust

The apex court asked the ACC and government to submit concise statements on the appeal in two weeks after receiving the leave granting order, the report said.

Ms Zia has also been asked to submit concise statement on the appeal in two weeks after the ACC and government file their concise statements. A concise statement contains the points on which the lawyer placed arguments on the appeals before the court.

After passing the order, Hossain said all the four judges of the apex court passed the order unanimously after examining the records of the case.

— PTI

JI wants A.Q. Khan as caretaker Pakistan PM

Chief cites example of A.P.J. Abdul Kalam becoming President

SHAFQAT ALI ISLAMABAD, MARCH 19

Pakistan Jamat-e-Islami (JI) leader Sirajul Haq has recommended that the government and opposition should appoint nuclear scientist Dr Abdul Qadir Khan for the position of caretaker Prime Minister.

Addressing a rally in Karak, Sirajul Haq said Dr Abdul Qadir Haq should be made caretaker Prime Minister as he possessed a "neutral" personality. "Dr Qadir has made Pakistan an Islamic atomic power which is a stupendous and unforgettable feat," he said.

The Jamat-e-Islami chief said former military ruler Pervez Musharraf earlier came under US pressure and placed restrictions on Dr Abdul Qadir Khan and kept him under house arrest while India held the prestige of its atomic scientist and made him the President APJ Abdul Kalam. "There is a need to redress Musharraf's injustice and repay Dr Abdul Qadir Khan's virtue for the nation by honouring him," Mr Haq said.

He said: "I congratulate Xi Jinping for taking the presidency charge once again. I expect that a new era of progression and happiness will begin under his leadership."

Mr Haq also called Pakistan Super League a good omen for Pakistan and said that the country will get a chance to witness a great game and good entertainment.

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(A Government of India Undertaking)  
MM TCB DEPARTMENT  
Bhopal - 462 022 (India) Phone No.: +91 755 250 3462  
Email: ravi\_prakash@bhel.in  
TENDER NOTICE NO: MM/TCB/E-7273732  
Sealed quotations are invited in two part bid system (Techno Commercial Bid- Part I and Price Bid - Part II separately) for Rate Contract of Tangential Beech Wood Clamping Rings, as per BHEL specification.  
Tender documents along with item specification can be downloaded from our website www.bhelpl.co.in till 09.04.18 (5.00 PM).  
Sealed tender in two part bid system should be submitted in our tender room addressed to Sr. Manager (MM-Coordination), BHEL, 2nd Floor, Administrative Building, P.O. Piplani, Bhopal - 462022, India, so as to reach on or before 11.00 AM on 10.04.2018. Tenders shall be opened on the same day at 02.00 PM.  
Note: Vendors are invited for registration with BHEL-Bhopal for supply of items given on Vendor's Portal of BHEL Bhopal website under "Vendors Required for Given Items". All interested suppliers including MSME suppliers may visit www.bhel.com or www.bhelpl.co.in/mm for online Vendor Registration Application.  
All corrigendum, corrections, amendments, time extensions, clarifications etc. to the tender notice will be hosted on BHEL website (www.bhelpl.co.in and www.bhel.com). Bidders should regularly visit website(s) to keep themselves updated.  
CPR-10(T)/371/17-18/MM-TCB Dy. Manager (MRX)





Zimbabwe Prez Emmerson Mnangagwa threatens to prosecute forex culprits

I understand how some of what I said upset people and can be misinterpreted. I meant no disrespect to any individual or group — Hillary Clinton, Ex-US secretary of state

IN BRIEF

Turkish embassy in Denmark attacked

Helsinki: Danish police say they are searching at least two people suspected of attacking the Turkish embassy in Copenhagen with firebombs. Henrik Moll, head of Copenhagen police, said on Monday that no one was injured in the early morning attack that caused minor damage to the exterior of the embassy building. He said patrolling police officers partly witnessed the incident and saw two people fleeing from the scene.

Two hurt in 4th Texas bombing

Houston: Two people were injured in another explosion in Texas' capital Austin, the fourth mysterious bombing in the city this month, police said on Monday, sparking panic among the residents. The latest blast occurred on Sunday night in a suburban neighbourhood in southwest Austin. Authorities believe the explosion may have been triggered by a tripwire, but cautioned that they were still processing the scene.

Austrian court to consider 3rd gender

Berlin: Austria's Constitutional Court says it will consider whether a third gender should be an option for official records, taking up the case of a person who unsuccessfully sought to have their entry changed to "inter" or a similar word. The court said on Monday that an initial review concerns that having to list one's gender as female or male contravenes the privacy protections enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights. The highest court in neighbouring Germany ruled in November that people must be allowed to appear in official records as neither male nor female.

Neo-Nazi jailed for 'torture' in Russia

Moscow: A Russian court on Monday jailed a former martial arts champion and notorious neo-Nazi for three and a half years after he forced 12 prostitutes to walk naked through the streets of Saint Petersburg. Vyacheslav Datsik broke into a small hotel that also functioned as a brothel in the centre of the northwestern city in May 2016 after declaring a "war on prostitutes". Acting with accomplices, he then forced 12 women and a man — allegedly a client — to follow him to a police station while still naked. Datsik told police that he "just wanted the women to march in their work uniforms". He was found guilty of hooliganism, breaking into property and a "premeditated attack on the health of others". — AFP

COURT ORDERS GROUNDING OF GUPTA JET IN SA

Johannesburg: A private jet used by a business family at the heart of corruption allegations against former South African president Jacob Zuma was grounded Monday by a court order, local media reported. The whereabouts of the Bombardier Global 6000 jet is unknown, but the High Court in Johannesburg ordered that it must be landed and kept at the Lanseria airport outside the city. The SABC state broadcaster reported the court ruling, saying that the Guptas had been leasing the jet and that the family were banned from using it. The court gave the Guptas 15 days to hand over the luxury jet. Export Development Canada (EDC), Canada's state-run trade credit agency, petitioned the court alleging the controversial family's businesses had defaulted on a \$41-million (33-million) loan for the plane. — AFP

UK, U.S. SLAM ZUCKERBERG

Ask him to appear before panel for probe; FB accused of misleading, data breach

London, March 19: Lawmakers on both sides of the Atlantic criticised Facebook and its chief executive, Mark Zuckerberg, after reports surfaced that another company, Cambridge Analytica, improperly harvested information from 50 million Facebook users.

A British lawmaker accused Facebook on Sunday of misleading officials by downplaying the risk of users' data being shared without their consent.

Conservative legislator Damian Collins, who heads the British Parliament's media committee, said he would ask Zuckerberg or another Facebook executive to appear before his panel, which is investigating disinformation and "fake news."

Collins said Facebook has "consistently understated" the risk of data leaks and gave misleading answers to the committee. "Someone has to take responsibility for this," he said. "It's time for Mark Zuckerberg to stop hiding behind his Facebook page."

Collins also accused the head of the UK-based data firm Cambridge Analytica, Alexander Nix, of lying. Nix told the committee last month that his firm had not received data from a researcher accused of obtaining millions of Facebook users' personal information.

In Washington, Sen.



'STOP HIDING BEHIND FB PAGE'

CONSERVATIVE legislator Damian Collins, who heads the British Parliament's media committee, said that it's time for Mark Zuckerberg to stop hiding behind his Facebook page.

FORMER Cambridge Analytica employee Chris Wylie told Britain's Channel 4 news that the company was able to amass a huge database very quickly from an app developed by an academic that vacuumed up data from Facebook users who agreed to fill out a survey, as well as their friends and contacts — a process of which most were unaware.



Amy Klobuchar, a Democrat from Minnesota, said on Twitter that Zuckerberg "needs to testify before Senate Judiciary."

"This is a major breach that must be investigated," Klobuchar, a member of the Judiciary Committee, said. "It's clear these platforms can't police themselves."

Sen. Mark Warner of

Virginia, the top Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, echoed Klobuchar's complaint.

"This is more evidence that the online political advertising market is essentially the Wild West," he said. "It's clear that, left unregulated, this market will continue to be prone to deception and lacking in transparency."

Massachusetts Attorney

FACEBOOK and the analytics company that worked with Donald Trump's election team have come under mounting pressure, with calls for investigations and hearings to explain a vast data breach that affected tens of millions of people.

IN BRITAIN, the head of the parliamentary committee investigating fake news accused Cambridge Analytica and Facebook of misleading MPs.

MORE THAN 50 million Facebook profiles were harvested and used to build a system that may have influenced voters in the 2016 presidential campaign.

CONSERVATIVE legislator Damian Collins said Facebook has "consistently understated" the risk of data leaks and gave misleading answers to the committee.

General Maura Healey said on Twitter that "Massachusetts residents deserve answers" and announced that her office will investigate.

The officials reacted to reports in The New York Times and The Guardian of London that Cambridge Analytica, which is best known for working on President Donald Trump's 2016 campaign, had

improperly obtained Facebook user data and retained it after claiming it had deleted the information.

Former Cambridge Analytica employee Chris Wylie said that the company obtained information from 50 million Facebook users, using it to build psychological profiles so voters could be targeted with ads and stories. — AFP

Bomb hoax emails sent to hundreds of schools in UK

ADITI KHANNA LONDON, MARCH 19

Over 400 schools in England were on Monday targeted with bomb hoax emails that claimed a device would be detonated on the grounds unless online payments were made to an address.

Scotland Yard said that the "malicious communications" were under investigation but ruled out any threat to life.

"These are currently being treated as hoaxes. At this stage there is no evidence to suggest that this is terror-related," the Metropolitan Police said.

Schools in London, Manchester, Northumbria and North Yorkshire were among those that received the email, which demanded \$5,000 warned against calling the police.

Unwell Suu Kyi scraps Oz appearance

Sydney, March 19: Myanmar's de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi today pulled out of a public speech and question-and-answer session in Sydney because she was "not feeling well", the event's organisers said.

Suu Kyi has been under fire internationally for her public silence about a military crackdown in Myanmar's Rakhine state that has seen nearly 700,000 of the Muslim Rohingya minority flee to Bangladesh. — AFP

Schools in London, Manchester, Northumbria and North Yorkshire were among those that received the email, which demanded \$5,000 warned against calling the police

reports of 19 schools being targeted by the hoax emails.

Greater Manchester Police's Assistant Chief Constable Vanessa Jardine said: "I want to assure you that we are working closely with all of the schools to ensure the safety of pupils and staff. "We are carrying out extensive enquiries to understand the full circumstances and although there is not currently believed to be any direct threat, as with any report of this nature, they are all being thoroughly investigated."

Police forces in Cumbria, Cambridgeshire, Humberside, Hertfordshire, Lincolnshire, Derbyshire and Avon and Somerset also issued statements saying schools and colleges in their areas had been targeted. — PTI

'India, US role in Maldives crucial'

Washington, March 19: It is time the US and India play a key role to restore normalcy and democracy in Maldives which is under a state of emergency, a top opposition leader from the troubled island nation has said here.

President Abdulla Yameen had imposed emergency which was extended by another 30 days last month by parliament, citing an ongoing national security threat and a constitutional crisis.

Several countries including the US and India along with the UN have urged the Yameen government to lift the emergency and restore normalcy.

Ahmed Naseem, former foreign affairs minister of Maldives and a leading opposition leader, has said that he is hoping that the

Ahmed Naseem, former foreign affairs minister of Maldives said that the military should go back to its barracks and Parliament should be allowed to function

international community led by the US and India would come to the rescue of Maldives given the gravity of the situation and the threat that it poses to the free flow of global commerce though this strategic sea trade route.

The United States and India are the two key players and it is time that these two countries restore normalcy and democracy in Maldives, Naseem said. — PTI

Wang Li may lead India-China talks

Beijing, March 19: China's tough-talking Foreign Minister Wang Yi was elevated today to the top diplomatic post of State Councillor, a move which could make him the new Special Representative to handle the vexed boundary negotiations with India, according to officials.

Wang, 65, would also continue to head the Foreign Ministry, becoming the first Chinese official to hold the dual post in recent years.

Wang's name for the post of State Councillor and Foreign Minister was endorsed by the parliament - the National People's Congress (NPC), state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang proposed Wang's name as part of a new set of officials to head various positions for the next five years in the government headed by President Xi Jinping.

In Chinese power hierarchy, State Councillor is ranked higher than Foreign Minister and considered as the top diplomat of the country and is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the policies of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC).

Wang succeeds Yang Jiechi, 67, who last year has been elevated to become member of the CPC's Politburo, a high ranking body of the CPC headed by Xi.

By virtue of being the State Councillor, Wang is also expected to succeed Yang as China's Special Representative for India-China boundary talks, though officials say the Chinese government's position will become clear only after an official notification. National Security Adviser Ajit Doval is



WANG succeeds Yang Jiechi, 67, who last year has been elevated to become member of the CPC's Politburo, a high ranking body of the CPC headed by Xi.

THE POST of the Special Representative is regarded a key one as its plays a major role in providing a broader policy framework for the course of the India-China relations because the two officials have the political mandate to discuss the whole gamut of the relations during their annual meets.

India's Special Representative. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying told a media briefing today that one has to wait and see whether Wang would take over as the Special Representative for the India-China boundary talks. —PTI

North in talks to free US detainees

Seoul, March 19: North Korea is in talks with the US and Sweden to release three Americans held in the North, reports said, as diplomatic activities gathered pace ahead of Pyongyang's planned summits with Washington and Seoul.

The release of the three Korean-Americans -- all held in the North after being separately charged with unspecified "hostile acts" against the regime -- is under discussion through multiple channels almost two weeks after President Donald Trump agreed to meet the North's Kim Jong Un, reports said.

While Pyongyang has yet to confirm it even made the summit offer -- relayed by Seoul envoys who had met Kim in Pyongyang -- the stunning announcement has triggered a race to set a credible agenda for what would be historic talks between the two leaders.

Seoul-based MBC TV station reported Sunday that Pyongyang and Washington had "practically reached" a final agreement on the release of Kim Hak-song, Kim Sang-duk and Kim Dong-chul.

"They are hammering out details over the tim-

US, Japan discuss denuclearisation ahead of summit

Seoul, March 19: Top US, South Korean and Japanese officials have discussed how to achieve a complete denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula ahead of upcoming inter-Korean and US-North Korean summit talks. Seoul has said previously that North Korean leader Kim Jong-un agreed to hold summit talks with South Korean President Moon Jae-in in late April. Seoul says Kim proposed meeting with President Donald Trump, and Trump agreed to him by the end of May. —AP

ing of the release," it quoted an unnamed South Korean diplomatic source as saying.

The negotiation was held through the North's mission to the United Nations and the US State Department -- an unofficial avenue of communication dubbed the "New York channel," the source said.

— AFP

CHANGING ATTITUDE

Saudi crown prince rejects restrictions on women clothing

'Women have right to choose attire'

Riyadh, March 19: Women in Saudi Arabia need not wear headcover or the black abaya, the loose-fitting, full-length robes symbolic of Islamic piety, as long as their attire is "decent and respectful", the kingdom's reform-minded crown prince said.

With the ascent to power of young Prince Mohammad bin Salman, the kingdom has seen an expansion in women's rights including a decision to allow women to attend mixed public sporting events and the right to

drive cars from this summer. The changes have been hailed as proof of a new progressive trend towards modernisation in the deeply conservative Muslim kingdom, although the gender-segregated nation continues to be criticised for its continued constraints on women.

"The laws are very clear and stipulated in the laws of sharia (Islamic law): that women wear decent, respectful clothing, like men," Prince Mohammed said in an interview with



Prince Mohammad bin Salman

CBS television aired late on Sunday. "This, however, does not particularly specify a black abaya or a black head cover. The decision is entirely left for women to decide what type of decent and respectful attire she

chooses to wear."

A senior cleric said last month that women should dress modestly, but this did not necessitate wearing the abaya. It remains unclear if these statements signal a change in the enforcement of women's dress code in the kingdom. Saudi Arabia has no written legal code to go with the texts making up sharia, and police and judiciary have long enforced a strict dress code requiring Saudi women to wear abayas and in many cases to cover

their hair and faces.

But the kingdom has witnessed a new climate of social freedoms with the rise of the 32-year-old crown prince to power after decades of elderly rulers.

Saudi women have started wearing more colorful abayas in recent years, the light blues and pinks in stark contrast with the traditional black. Open abayas over long skirts or jeans are also becoming more common in some parts of the country. — Reuters



## IN BRIEF



### Fake Hepatitis B vaccines found at Ugandan facilities

**Kampala:** Ugandan authorities say they have found fake Hepatitis B vaccines at some health facilities, including in the capital, Kampala. A statement from the Ministry of Health says the fake vaccines allegedly originating from India, were discovered during routine checks at facilities in four districts. It says some suspects have been arrested in the scam. The scandal has fueled concerns about corruption in a health sector long plagued by malfeasance. Fake drugs are a common problem across Africa. A Ugandan lawmaker died of complications related to Hepatitis B last year, bringing more attention to the virus that attacks the liver and can cause chronic illness. The Hepatitis B prevalence rate in Uganda stands at 10 percent, higher than the HIV rate, according to the most recent government figures. — AP



### 'Vaping likely to lead to fatty liver disease'

**Los Angeles:** Using electronic cigarettes may lead to accumulation of fat in the liver, a study on mice exposed to the devices suggests. "The popularity of electronic cigarettes has been rapidly increasing in part because of advertisements that they are safer than conventional cigarettes," said Theodore C Friedman from Charles R Drew University of Medicine & Science in the US. "But because extra fat in the liver is likely to be detrimental to health, we conclude that e-cigarettes are not as safe as they have been promoted to consumers," said Friedman, lead author of the study presented at the Endocrine Society's annual meeting in Chicago. E-cigarettes contain nicotine, which Friedman and other researchers have reported is associated with non-alcohol fatty liver diseases. However, the long-term effects of e-cigarettes on liver disease, diabetes, heart disease or stroke are unknown. In the 12-week study, Friedman and colleagues studied mice missing the gene for apolipoprotein E, which makes them more prone to developing heart disease and fat in the liver. All of the mice were fed a diet relatively high in fat and cholesterol. One group of mice was put in a chamber that exposed them to e-cigarette aerosol, so that their blood nicotine levels were similar to that of smokers and e-cigarette users. A second group of mice was exposed to saline aerosol. The researchers collected liver samples, and looked at genes in the liver affected by e-cigarettes using a technique called RNA sequence analysis. They found changes in 433 genes that were associated with fatty liver development and progression in the mice exposed to e-cigarettes. The researchers also found that genes related to circadian rhythms (the body clock) were changed in mice exposed to e-cigarettes. Circadian rhythm dysfunction is known to accelerate the development of liver disease including fatty liver diseases. — PTI

► **Researchers collected liver samples, and looked at genes in the liver affected by e-cigarettes using a technique, RNA sequence analysis. They found changes in 433 genes.**

# New male birth control pill safe, effective: Study

**Washington, March 19:** In a major step towards developing a once-daily 'male pill', a new birth control drug has been found to be safe and effective in men, scientists say. Like the pill for women, the experimental male oral contraceptive — called dimethandrolone undecanoate, or DMAU — combines activity of an androgen (male hormone) like testosterone, and a progestin, said Stephanie Page, a professor at the University of Washington in the US.

"DMAU is a major step forward in the development of a once-daily 'male pill'," said Page, senior investigator of the study presented at the Endocrine Society's annual meeting in Chicago.

"Many men say they would prefer a daily pill as a reversible contraceptive, rather than long-acting injections or topical gels, which are also in development," she said.

Progress toward a male birth control pill has been stymied because available oral forms of testosterone may cause liver inflammation, and they clear the body too quickly for once-daily dosing, thus requiring two doses a day.

However, DMAU contains undecanoate, a long-chain fatty acid, which Page said slows this clearance.

DMAU is being developed by the US National Institutes of Health, and Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

The study included 100 healthy men, aged 18 to 50 years.

The researchers tested three different doses of DMAU (100, 200, and 400

## 'Small dose of Viagra daily may cut bowel cancer risk'

**Washington, March 19:** A small, daily dose of popular erectile dysfunction drug Viagra may reduce the risk of colorectal cancer, according to a study conducted in mice.

Viagra cut in half the formation of polyps, an abnormal and often asymptomatic clump of cells on the lining of the intestines that may become cancer, said Darren D Browning, researcher at Augusta University in the US.

Next steps should include a clinical trial for the drug in patients considered at high risk of colorectal cancer, such as those with a strong family history, multiple previous polyps and chronic intestinal inflammation like colitis, according to the study published in the journal *Cancer Prevention Research*.

Viagra has been used safely for years in a wide range of doses and age groups, from premature infants with pulmonary hypertension to the elderly with erectile dysfunction, Browning said.

When placed in the drinking water, Browning's team found that Viagra reduced polyps in a mouse model with a genetic mutation that occurs in humans, causing them to produce hundreds of polyps starting as teenagers and essentially always resulting in colorectal cancer.



► **Viagra has been used safely for years in a wide range of doses and age groups, from premature infants with pulmonary hypertension to the elderly with erectile dysfunction.**

► **Viagra relaxes the smooth muscle cells around blood vessels so the vessels can fill with blood, which is how it helps both erectile dysfunction and pulmonary hypertension.**

"Giving a baby dose of Viagra can reduce the amount of tumours in these animals by half," Browning said.

Viagra is best known for its ability to relax the smooth muscle cells around blood vessels so the vessels can more easily fill with blood, which is how it helps both erectile dysfunction and pulmonary hypertension.

However, Browning's lab is showing it also increases levels of the chemical cyclic GMP, which is known to affect the intestinal lining, called the epithelium.

According to Browning, the results of increased cyclic GMP include suppression of some of the excessive cell proliferation that occurs in the gut and an increase in normal cell differentiation as well as the natural elimination of abnormal cells, through a process called apoptosis.

"When we give Viagra, we shrink the whole proliferating compartment," said Browning, in an area of our body that directly deals with whatever we put in our mouths and normally experiences high cell turnover.

"Proliferating cells are more subject to mutations that cause cancer," he said.

Existing polyps were not affected, more evidence that targeting cyclic GMP signalling appears to be a good prevention strategy in high-risk patients, said Browning at Augusta University. — PTI

## Nasa powers on its latest sun-tracking instrument

**Washington, March 19:** Nasa has powered on its latest instrument on the International Space Station (ISS) to detect the total amount of light energy emitted by the sun.

Total and Spectral solar Irradiance Sensor (TSIS-1), installed on the ISS, is fully operational with all instruments collecting science data, Nasa said.

"TSIS-1 extends a long data record that helps us understand the sun's influence on Earth's radiation budget, ozone layer, atmospheric circulation, and ecosystems, and the effects that solar variability has on the Earth system and climate change," said Dong Wu, TSIS-1 project scientist at Nasa's Goddard Space Flight Center in the US.

"This sensor's data will give us a better understanding of Earth's primary energy supply and provide information to help improve models simulating the planet's climate," said Wu.

The instrument was launched from Cape



Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket on December 15, last year.

For over two months, the operations team at the University of Colorado, Boulder in the US has been testing TSIS-1.

The sensor studies the total amount of light energy emitted by the sun using the Total Irradiance Monitor, one of two sensors onboard the ISS.

The monitor first started collecting science data — called "first light" — on January 11 after its doors were opened to fully view the sun.

The sensor extends a 40-year measurement of the sun's total energy to

Earth.

The second onboard sensor, called the Spectral Irradiance Monitor, measures how the sun's energy is distributed over the ultraviolet regions of light.

Measuring the distribution of the sun's energy is important because each wavelength of light interacts with Earth's atmosphere differently.

For instance, spectral irradiance measurements of the sun's ultraviolet radiation are critical to understanding the ozone layer — Earth's natural sunscreen that protects life from harmful radiation.

The sensor experienced first light on March 4 when full science data collection began. — PTI

## Low sperm count may signal poor health: Research

**London, March 19:** Men with low sperm count are more likely to have a number of health issues that put them at increased risk of illness, a study has found.

The research on 5,177 men in Italy evaluated semen quality, reproductive function and metabolic risk in males referred for fertility evaluation.

"Our study clearly shows that low sperm count by itself is associated with metabolic alterations, cardiovascular risk and low bone mass," said Alberto Ferlin, who carried the study at University of Padova in Italy.

"Infertile men are likely to have important co-existing health problems or risk factors that can impair quality of life and shorten their lives," said Ferlin, now an associate professor at University of Brescia in Italy.

"Fertility evaluation gives men the unique opportunity for health assessment and disease prevention," he said.

In the study, about half the men had low sperm counts and were 1.2 times more likely than those with normal sperm counts to have greater body fat (bigger waistline and higher body mass index, or BMI).

They were also more likely to have higher blood pressure, "bad" (LDL) cholesterol and triglycerides, and lower "good" (HDL) cholesterol.

They also had a higher frequency of metabolic syndrome, a cluster of these and other metabolic risk factors that increase the chance of developing diabetes, heart disease and

### MALE MALADIES

► **In the study, about half the men had low sperm counts and were 1.2 times more likely than those with normal sperm counts to have greater body fat. They were also more likely to have higher blood pressure, "bad" (LDL) cholesterol and triglycerides.**

stroke, the researchers said.

A measure of insulin resistance, another problem that can lead to diabetes, also was higher in men with low sperm counts, they said.

Low sperm count was defined as less than 39 million per ejaculate.

The researchers found a 12-fold increased risk of hypogonadism, or low testosterone levels, in men with low sperm counts.

Half the men with low testosterone had osteoporosis or low bone mass, a possible precursor to osteoporosis, as found on a bone density scan.

These findings, according to Ferlin, suggest that low sperm count of itself is associated with poorer measures of cardiometabolic health but that hypogonadism is mainly involved in this association.

He cautioned that their study does not prove that low sperm counts cause metabolic derangements, but rather that sperm quality is a mirror of the general male health. — PTI

## New algorithm may curb cyber attacks on GPS devices

**Houston, March 19:** Scientists have developed a novel algorithm that may help detect and prevent cyber attacks on GPS-enabled devices in real time.

The algorithm developed by researchers at University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) in the US mitigates the effects of spoofed GPS attacks on electrical grids and other GPS-reliant technologies.

"Malicious agents have the ability to disrupt a device's understanding of time and location by emitting a signal that is pretending to be a GPS signal," said Nikolaos Gatsis from UTSA.

"This can be very harmful in several different realms of technology," said Gatsis, researcher on the study published in the journal *IEEE Transactions on Industrial Electronics*.

The US electrical power grid, for example, depends on GPS to give time stamps for its meas-

urements at stations across the country.

Although reliable, researchers in laboratories across the world have shown that the system can be vulnerable to spoofing cyber-attacks.

"In broad terms, malicious cyber-attackers can clone the GPS signal and display, for instance, the wrong time or the wrong location," said David Akopian from UTSA.

"This can wreak all sorts of havoc. It can send people to the wrong location or render hours of data useless," Akopian said.

The algorithm, which can be applied to cell phones or computers as easily as a new app, has the ability to recognise false GPS signals and counter an attack while it occurs.

The main focus of researchers is to prevent attacks on the American electrical power grid, but the algorithm is applicable to several different devices. — PTI

## Parents find the silver lining of social media

**Washington, March 19:** While social media has been linked to a negative impact on children, most parents believe that it also helps them keep track of their tweens, a US poll has found.

"The tween stage brings new challenges for parents as they often must balance their child's desire for more freedom and independence with supervision. It's not an easy balancing act," said Sarah Clark from University of Michigan in the US.

The C S Mott Children's Hospital National Poll found that nearly all parents of tweens aged 9-12 agree that social media makes it easier for kids to get in trouble.

However, 61 per cent also felt that social media helps parents keep track of tweens.

The survey found that 55 per cent of parents read their tween's texts or social media pages to learn more information if their tween was invited to a boy-girl party at the home of an unfamiliar family.

It also found that 39 per cent parents track their tween's location on their cell phone during the party.

Mothers were more likely than fathers to say they would use technology to monitor their tweens.

"Social media has opened another door of questions about what

parents should be keeping tabs on," said Clark, co-director of the poll.

"Establishing family rules around the use of social media, and discussing the reasons for those rules, is an important part of parenting tweens," Clark said.

The majority of parents still wanted to learn more about what their kids were up to the traditional way, with 91 per cent saying they would talk with a classmate's parents when dropping their tween at a party if they did not know the family.

Seventy-six per cent would call ahead to make sure the classmate's parents would be supervising the party, researchers

said. About one in four parents in the survey were very concerned about their tweens experimenting with sexual activity, marijuana or other drugs, beer or liquor, and guns or other weapons.

Parents reported greater concern about tween boys experimenting with guns, but otherwise had similar levels of concern for their tween boys and girls, researchers said.

— PTI







David Byrne earns his first Top 10 album in the United States with his latest work, *American Utopia*

THE ASIAN AGE

TUESDAY | 20 MARCH 2018 | NEW DELHI

phenomenal to me, to have that music cross all cultures. Music is a universal language.



— Ronald Bell  
Musician, Kool and the Gang

SHORT TAKES

Gotham star Cory Smith is gay

Los Angeles: Actor Cory Michael Smith, best known for his work as Edward Nygma/The Riddler on the Fox series *Gotham*, has come out as gay. The 31-year-old opened up about his sexuality while promoting his new movie, *1985*, which follows the story of a gay returning home after his partner dies of AIDS. "There's something special about telling a story that feels closer to home. I'm not exactly like The Riddler in real life. I'm from Middle America... I'm from Ohio. I've been living here (in New York) for a while, and there are stretches when I don't see my family often. "Going home and that whole charade is very familiar. The first family dinner after a while. Coming out to a family, the fear of that," Cory told *The Daily Beast*. — PTI

Its a boy for Eddie Redmayne

London: Oscar winner Eddie Redmayne and his wife have announced the birth of their second child, a boy. Luke Richard Bagshaw Redmayne was born March 10. He joins his 21-month-old sister Iris Mary. The 36-year-old in February told ABC's *Live with Kelly and Ryan* that he and his wife, Hannah, did not know the sex of their babies before birth. Redmayne won an Oscar for portraying Stephen Hawking in the 2014 film *The Theory of Everything*. He also appeared in the 2016 Harry Potter prequel *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*. — AP



Cabello: My decision to quit, not Taylor

London: Singer Camila Cabello has shut down the rumours that pop diva Taylor Swift was behind her decision to quit girl band Fifth Harmony. Cabello, who left the band in December 2016, said her decision to embark on a solo career was purely hers. "It annoyed me that people said she was encouraging me because I know that she probably got a lot of negative criticism for that. Absolutely nobody could ever persuade me to do something. If I don't want to do something the whole world could be telling me and I won't do it. And if I do then the whole world could be telling me to not do it and I'll do it. I've always been that way," she said. — PTI

SHERLOCK IS 'NOT FUN ANYMORE', SAYS MARTIN

London: Actor Martin Freeman, who played Dr Watson on *Sherlock*, has hinted that the beloved series may not return anytime soon as making it is "no longer" fun for the cast. Benedict Cumberbatch played the eccentric detective in BBC's modern interpretation of Arthur Conan Doyle's work. The series became a massive hit as soon as it aired, making Cumberbatch an international star while cementing Freeman's reputation as one of the finest British actors but managing fans' expectations has not been easy for the producers. "Not massively. Um... I think after series four (it) felt like a pause. I think we felt we'd done it for a bit now. And part of it, speaking for myself is (due to) the reception of it," Freeman told *The Telegraph*. — PTI



Butler Burrell claims he had 310 gifts from Diana Charles tried to stop court case of Lady Di's butler

London: It was recently, alleged Prince Charles tried to prevent a court case involving Princess Diana's butler Paul Burrell, the *Daily Mail* reported.

It is thought he was worried the royal family might be humiliated if the case against Burrell were to go any further.

In 2001, the police raided Burrell's home in Cheshire and found he was in possession of items belonging to Diana. Burrell claimed the 310 items discovered, worth close to £4.5million, were gifts from the princess.

A new biography, *The Rebel Prince*, reveals Burrell sent the prince a note offering to return the items if he would not be prosecuted.

Investigative journalist Tom Bower is the author of the new book. The legal advisers felt there was too much evidence not to prosecute, even



Prince Charles

though Charles did contemplate it, media reports reveal.

In order for there to be no prosecution, Diana's sister, Lady Sarah McCorquodale and Prince William, who were to inherit her belongings, had to agree to it. However, Lady McCorquodale insisted that Burrell be charged, the book revealed.

He appeared in the Old Bailey in October 2002.

As proceeding went on, there came another twist. 11 days after the trial began, the Queen had "a



Paul Burrell

recollection". The trial was dropped after she remembered she gave Burrell the items to care for.

Meanwhile, Prince Charles lawyers have dismissed the book's sources. — Agencies



Models present creations by young fashion designers from Pearl Academy during the last day of Autumn/Winter 2018 fashion week in New Delhi on Sunday. — AFP



Amanda Crew attends the *Silicon Valley* premiere at Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, California on Sunday. — AFP



A woman beats a drum as she participates in a rally to celebrate Maharashtra New Year in Mumbai on Sunday. — AP

(Below) Actor Mark Hamill poses for photographers with the Empire Icon Award in London on Sunday. — AP



2 FILMS BASED ON INDIAN SOCIAL ISSUES SCREENED AT FILM FEST IN NEW YORK

New York: Two films, which focus on social issues in India, were screened at a leading film festival that shone spotlight on pressing topics such as immigration and human trafficking.

The fifth annual edition of SR Socially Relevant Film Festival New York, which opened in the city last week, will screen 70 films from 35 countries on a broad range of social topics such as immigration, women and girls, human trafficking, climate change, aging, mental health, disability, social justice and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBTQ) rights, according to a statement from the festival issued.

"The Mission of the SR Socially Relevant Film Festival is to shine the spotlight on filmmakers who tell compelling, socially relevant, human interest stories across a broad range of social issues. The festival was created as a response to the proliferation of violence and violent forms of storytelling in media and entertainment," it said.

Two movies with focus on India are *Keep Believing* and *Beyond the Grid*

*Keep Believing* tells the tale of a man Frans Baartmans who left his home in The Netherlands in 1979 to live in India amongst the Dalits in the slums of Nagwa, Varanasi. It showcases how Frans fought the powerful to ensure equality, acknowledgement and dignity for the Dalits.

The other film premiered at the festival is *Beyond the Grid* by Vinit Parmar. It captures the lives of impoverished, remote island villagers in India's Varanasi region, where they have lived without electricity for years but are now the first developing village to switch to renewable energy. The festival was founded by actor and artist Nora Armani. — PTI

NEWS NUGGETS

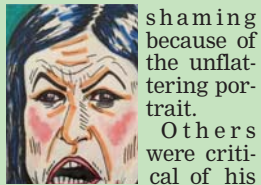
MISSING GIANT DUCK FOUND IN AUSTRALIA

Sydney: A giant yellow inflatable duck named Daphne that made a break from its moorings in Australia has been located after a week on the lam, its swimming club owners said Monday. Daphne — the oversized mascot of the Cockburn Masters Swimming Club in Perth — made a bid for freedom on March 11, drifting out into the Indian Ocean and sparking an appeal for help along Australia's west coast. Reports of sightings flooded in, including one from 440 kms away. But on Monday a local fisherman revealed that he had spotted the escaping bath toy on the day of its disappearance — just 30 kms off shore. "No-one knew about a missing duck at that point, we didn't know where it came from," Tony Gibb said. — AFP



CARREY CRITICISED FOR PORTRAIT BELIEVED TO BE WH SECY. SANDERS

Los Angeles: Jim Carrey is being criticised on social media for a portrait he painted that is believed to be White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders. The actor and comedian on Saturday tweeted the painting with the caption: "This is the portrait of a so-called Christian whose only purpose in life is to lie for the wicked. Monstrous!" Some Twitter users accused Carrey of



shaming because of the unflattering portrait. Others were critical of his Carrey use of painted Sarah Christian. Sanders spokeswoman for Carrey confirms it is his painting. But she would not confirm it is Sanders. The White House has not returned a message seeking comment. — AP

Andria Zafirakou is the first Brit teacher to win the award Teacher wins \$1m prize for inner city work

Dubai: A British school teacher won a highly-competitive \$1 million teaching prize on Monday for her work with inner-city children in London, helping students feel welcome and safe in a borough with one of the highest murder rates in the country.

Andria Zafirakou beat out some 30,000 applicants from around the world to win the annual Global Teacher Prize, which honours an exceptional teacher who's made a significant contribution to the profession.

The Alpert Community School teacher was awarded for



her work in the London borough of Brent, one of the most ethnically diverse places in the country. Her students come from some of the poorest families in Britain, and many of their parents don't necessarily speak English.

Andria Zafirakou beat out some 30,000 applicants from around the world to win the annual Global Teacher Prize, which honours an exceptional teacher who's made a significant contribution to the profession

She is the first British teacher to win the award. British Prime Minister Theresa May sent her a video message praising her "enormous dedication and creativity." "Being a great teacher requires resilience, ingenuity and a generous heart," the

prime minister said. "These are the qualities that you share with your students every day. So thank you for all you have done and continue to do." Zafirakou praised the "beautiful" diversity of her school's population and said the students are intense in their pursuit of an education. "I know if our school could open at six o'clock in the morning, there would be a queue of children waiting outside at five o'clock," she said. "That's how phenomenal they are." She was awarded the prize during a star-studded ceremony Sunday in Dubai hosted by Trevor Noah of *Daily Show*. — AP